



3 1761 03574 7369



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

(4)

769

7

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE
TRANSVAAL WAR

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE TRANSVAAL WAR

BY

LOUIS CRESWICKE

AUTHOR OF "ROXANE," ETC.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

IN SIX VOLUMES

¹⁴
VOL. III.—FROM THE BATTLE OF COLENZO,
15TH DEC. 1899, TO LORD ROBERTS'S ADVANCE INTO
THE FREE STATE, 12TH FEB. 1900

EDINBURGH: T. C. & E. C. JACK

1900

DT
930
C7
v. 3-4



CONTENTS—VOL. III.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE	PAGE	vii
-------------------------------	------	-----

CHAPTER I

THE SITUATION	PAGE	1	CHRISTMAS AT THE CAPE AND	PAGE	
DOINGS AT CHIEVELEY.	8		NATAL	14	

CHAPTER II

MAFEKING	PAGE	19	MAFEKING, NOVEMBER.	PAGE	31
KURUMAN AND ELSEWHERE.	25		KIMBERLEY	39	

CHAPTER III

LIFE WITH GENERAL GATACRE	PAGE	47	WITH GENERAL FRENCH	PAGE	52
-------------------------------------	------	----	-------------------------------	------	----

CHAPTER IV

THE COLONIALS AT BELMONT	PAGE	60	ACTIVITIES AND SURPRISES	PAGE	68
COLONEL PILCHER'S RAID	61		AT MODDER RIVER	72	

CHAPTER V

CHRISTMAS AT LADYSMITH	PAGE	79	THE ATTACK ON WAGON HILL	PAGE	81
----------------------------------	------	----	------------------------------------	------	----

CHAPTER VI

BULLER'S SECOND ADVANCE.	PAGE	92	THE THIRD GREAT EFFORT—VAAL	PAGE	
THE FLANK MOVEMENT	97		KRANTZ	117	
THE BATTLE OF SPION KOP	104		DISAPPOINTMENT AT LADYSMITH	125	
			LORD ROBERTS AT THE CAPE	131	

CHAPTER VII

THE WONDER OF THE WORLD	PAGE	136	WEST AUSTRALIA	PAGE	157
FIRST CANADIAN CONTINGENT	138		TASMANIA	157	
THE SECOND CANADIAN CONTINGENT	144		THE BUSHMEN'S CORPS	158	
STRATHCONA'S HORSE	146		INDIA'S CONTINGENTS	159	
NEW SOUTH WALES	148		THE SOUTH AFRICAN VOLUNTEERS—		
VICTORIA	150		CAPE COLONY	161	
NEW ZEALAND	151		NATAL	166	
QUEENSLAND	153		THE IMPERIAL YEOMANRY	167	
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	154		THE CITY IMPERIAL VOLUNTEERS	171	

CHAPTER VIII

AT COLESBERG	PAGE	174	"FIGHTING MAC" AT KOODOES-	PAGE	
LORD ROBERTS'S ADVANCE	183		BERG.	186	

APPENDIX	PAGE	190
THE STORY OF SPION KOP	190	LIST OF STAFF 199

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS—VOL. III.

BIRDS-EYE VIEW OF THE GROUND COVERED BY GENERAL BULLER'S OPERATIONS *At Front*

I. COLOURED PLATES

	PAGE		PAGE
FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS OF KANDAHAR, V.C. &c.	<i>Frontispiece</i>	ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY (ACTION FRONT)	100
SERGEANT-MAJOR—IMPERIAL LIGHT HORSE	24	CYCLISTS—LANCASHIRE FUSILIERS	120
ARMY SERVICE CORPS	40	PRIVATE, DRUMMERS, PIPER, AND BUGLER—THE BLACK WATCH	134
HOUSEHOLD CAVALRY—CAPTAIN, 2ND LIFE GUARDS	80	OFFICERS—CITY OF LONDON IMPERIAL VOLUNTEERS	176

2. FULL-PAGE PLATES

	PAGE		PAGE
A PICKET OF 13TH HUSSARS SURPRISED NEAR THE TUGELA RIVER	8	GOING OUT TO THE ATTACK ON SPION KOP THE SCENE ON SPION KOP	112
A RECONNAISSANCE IN FORCE WITH GENERAL FRENCH'S CAVALRY NEAR COLESBERG	56	FALLS ON THE TUGELA RIVER	124
COLONEL PILCHER'S ATTACK ON SUNNY-SIDE KOPJE	64	ARRIVAL AT CAPE TOWN OF WOUNDED FROM NATAL	132
H.M.S. "POWERFUL"	84	LADY MINTO PRESENTING COLOURS TO HERCHMER'S HORSE	144
THE GREAT ASSAULT ON LADYSMITH	88	THE CITY IMPERIAL VOLUNTEERS CROSSING WESTMINSTER BRIDGE	168
PIETERMARITZBURG FROM THE EAST	92	NEW ZEALANDERS SAVING A PICKET OF THE YORKSHIRE REGIMENT NEAR SLINGERSFONTEIN	184
THE CROSSING OF POTGEITER'S DRIFT, JANUARY 16	96	"FIGHTING MAC" AND THE HIGHLAND BRIGADE IN ACTION AT KOODOESBERG	188
TAKING THE 4.7 NAVAL GUN ACROSS THE TUGELA	104		

3. FULL-PAGE PORTRAITS

	PAGE		PAGE
LIEUT. - GENERAL FORESTIER WALKER, K.C.B.	16	MAJOR - GENERAL HECTOR A. MACDONALD, C.B.	72
MAJOR-GENERAL LORD KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM	32	LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR CHARLES WARREN, G.C.M.G.	128
MAJOR-GENERAL SIR W. F. GATACRE, K.C.B.	48	COLONEL W. D. OTTER	136
		HON. W. P. SCHREINER, C.M.G.	152
		GENERAL BRABANT, C.M.G.	160

4. MAPS AND ENGRAVINGS IN THE TEXT

	PAGE		PAGE
MAP—THE SEAT OF WAR	9	MOUNTAIN BATTERY	97
SKETCH OF POSITIONS AT MAFEKING	20	SKETCH, &c., OF SPION KOP	107
OUTPOST AND INTRENCHMENT AT MAFEKING	24	PLAN OF ENGAGEMENT OF SPION KOP	111
FACSIMILE OF HANDWRITING OF COL. BADEN POWELL	32	PLAN OF ENGAGEMENT OF VAAL KRANTZ	120
PLAN OF KIMBERLEY	40	BRITISH 7-POUNDER FIELD GUN	126
SPLINTER PROOF SHELTER AT KIMBERLEY	43	SIEGE OF LADYSMITH	128
MAP OF MOVEMENTS OF GATACRE AND FRENCH	51	NAVAL 12-POUNDER FIELD GUN	132
MAP OF COLONEL PILCHER'S RAID	62	MR. KRUGER'S AUTOGRAPH	134
LORD DUNDONALD'S GALLOPING GUN CARRIAGE	70	SOUTH AFRICAN SCOUT	163
MAXIM AUTOMATIC GUN OR POM-POM	75	12½-POUNDER FIELD GUN (C.I.V.)	172
MAP OF LADYSMITH	87	MAP OF POSITION AT COLESBERG	179
		SKETCH OF POSITION AT COLESBERG	181
		MAP ILLUSTRATING MOVEMENT TO KOODOESBERG	187

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE—VOL. III.

DECEMBER 1899.

- 17.—Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, K.P., G.C.B., V.C., &c., appointed Commander-in-Chief in South Africa, with Lord Kitchener of Khartoum as his Chief of the Staff.

War Office issued orders under which the remaining portion of the Army A Reserve were called up; and large reinforcements were to proceed to South Africa without delay.

General Gatacre advanced from Sterkstroom to Putters Kraal.

General French established his headquarters at Arundel.

Offers of Second Contingents by the Colonies accepted.

- 18.—Additional Battalions of Militia embodied. There were now fifty-four Battalions of Militia embodied.

Sir Charles Warren and the Staff of the Fifth Division left Cape Town.

Reconnaissance by General French. Sortie from Ladysmith.

- 19.—Important order issued from the War Office, announcing that the Government had decided to raise for service in South Africa a Mounted Infantry force, to be called "The Imperial Yeomanry." The force to be recruited from the Yeomanry.

- 21.—Mr. Winston Churchill arrived at Lourenço Marques after an adventurous journey.

- 23.—Departure of Lord Roberts from London and Southampton for the Cape.

- 24.—Dordrecht occupied by General Gatacre.

Sortie from Mafeking.

Two British officers captured by Boers near Chieveley.

- 25.—Blue-jackets blew up Tugela Road bridge, and cut off Boers with their guns.

Colonel Dalgety with Mounted Police and Colonial troops held Dordrecht. (Gatacre's Division.)

- 26.—Sir Charles Warren arrived at the Natal front.

Boers appeared at Victoria West.

Mafeking force attacked a Boer fort.

- 27.—Boers unsuccessfully bombarded Ladysmith.

- 28.—H.M.S. *Magicienne* captured German liner *Bundesrath*, near Delagoa Bay, with contraband of war on board.

- 30.—Skirmish near Dordrecht. Boers defeated with loss. Two British officers captured through mistaking Boers for New Zealanders

JANUARY 1900.

- 1.—Enrolment of the first draft of the City Imperial Volunteers.

Surrender of Kuruman, after a stout resistance, to the Boers. Twelve officers and 120 police captured.

General French occupied a kopje overlooking Colesberg. Flight of Boers, leaving their wrecked guns and quantities of stores.

Brilliant manœuvre by Lieutenant-Colonel Pilcher at Sunnyside. Captured the entire Boer camp, made forty prisoners, advanced and occupied Douglas on Vaal River.

Colonel Plumer and Colonel Holdsworth from Rhodesia continued their march to the relief of Mafeking.

- 2.—Loyal inhabitants of Douglas escorted to Belmont.

General French still engaged with enemy at Colesberg.

The Transvaal War

- 3.—General French reinforced from De Aar. Boers being surrounded; fighting in the hills.
General Gatacre repulsed Boer attack on position commanding Molteno. Colonel Pilcher, for "military reasons," evacuated Douglas.
- 4.—General Gatacre occupied Molteno; Boers retreated to Stormberg with loss.
General French manœuvring to enclose Colesberg; further fighting.
- 5.—General Gatacre hotly engaged at Molteno by Boers from Stormberg; drove them off, inflicting heavy losses.
- 6.—Great battle at Ladysmith. Boers repulsed on every side with heavy loss.
General Buller made a demonstration in force to aid General White. General French inflicted severe defeat on Boers at Colesberg. A Company of the 1st Suffolk Regiment captured.
- 9.—British troops invaded Free State territory near Jacobdsal. The Queensland and Canadian Volunteers cleared a large belt across the Free State border.
- 10.—Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener arrived at Cape Town.
Forward movement for the relief of Ladysmith from Chieveley and Freere.
- 11.—Sir Redvers Buller crossed the Little Tugela, and occupied the south bank of the Tugela at Potgieter's Drift.
Lord Dundonald and Mounted Brigade crossed the Tugela at Potgieter's Drift.
General Gatacre made a reconnaissance in force towards Stormberg.
- 13.—The City Imperial Volunteers left London for South Africa.
- 15.—Boers attacked General French and were repulsed at Colesberg.
- 16.—General Lyttleton and Mounted Brigade crossed the Tugela at Potgieter's Drift.
- 17.—Sir Charles Warren crossed, with his Division, at Trichardt's Drift.
Lord Dundonald had an action with the Boers near Acton Homes.
- 18.—Tugela bridged and crossed by a Brigade and battery.
- 20.—Sir Charles Warren moved towards Spion Kop.
Reconnaissance by Lord Dundonald.
- 21.—Heavy fighting by Clery's force; they attacked the Boers and captured ridge after ridge for three miles.
- 22.—Sir Charles Warren's entire army engaged.
- 23.—Spion Kop captured by Sir Charles Warren; General Woodgate wounded.
- 25-27.—Abandonment of Spion Kop.
Sir Charles Warren's force withdrew to south of Tugela.
- 27.—Brigadier-General Brabant, commanding a Brigade of Colonial forces, joined General Gatacre.
- 28.—General Kelly-Kenny occupied Thebus.
- 30.—British force re-occupied Prieska.

FEBRUARY 1900.

- 3.—Telegraphic communication restored between Mafeking and Gaberones.
- 4.—General Macdonald occupied Koodoe's Drift.
- 5.—General Buller crossed the Tugela at Manger's Drift.
- 6.—General Buller captured Vaal Krantz Hill.
- 7.—Vaal Krantz Hill abandoned, and British force withdrew south of the Tugela.
- 9.—General Macdonald retired to Modder River.
Lord Roberts arrived at Modder River.
- 10.—Colonel Hannay's force moved to Ramdam.
- 12.—General French with Cavalry Division, proceeding to the Relief of Kimberley, seized Dekeil's Drift.



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE COUNTRY COVERED BY GENERAL BULLER'S OPERATIONS FOR THE RELIEF OF LADYSMITH,

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE TRANSVAAL WAR

CHAPTER I

THE SITUATION

"The wave that breaks against a forward stroke
Beats not the swimmer back, but thrills him through
With joyous trust to win his way anew
Through stronger seas than first upon him broke
And triumphed. England's iron-tempered oak
Shrank not when Europe's might against her grew
Full, and her sun drunk up her foes like dew,
And lion-like from sleep her strength awoke.
As bold in fight as bold in breach of trust
We find our foes and wonder not to find,
Nor grudge them praise whom honour may not bind :
But loathing more intense than speaks disgust
Heaves England's heart, when scorn is bound to greet
Hunters and hounds whose tongues would lick their feet."

—ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

A WEEK of disaster had terminated woefully. Three British Generals in succession—Sir William Gatacre, Lord Methuen, and Sir Redvers Buller—had advanced against strongly fortified Boer positions and suffered repulse. The hearts of the miserable loyalists, who hung in dire suspense on the result of British action, sank in despair—their dismay and their grief were pitiful. Great Britain echoed their sentiment. Disappointment was universal. General Gatacre had failed through lack of caution and mischance ; the other Generals had come to grief owing to the circumstances which forced them willy nilly to hurry to the assistance of beleaguered towns in the face of overwhelming disadvantages, notably the lack of cavalry and the inefficiency of the guns. Lord Methuen had been unable to bring home his early victories owing to the absence of mounted men. Sir Redvers Buller had failed to dislodge the enemy from his strong, naturally fortified positions owing to the weakness of his artillery in comparison to that of the enemy, who had Nordenfeldt and Hotchkiss quick-firing guns in every available position. He had made a glorious attempt—owned to be magnificent ; but it was not war, and in his failure

The Transvaal War

he recognised that it was not the game of derring-do, but the game of "slim" warfare as played by his brother Boer which must claim his attention. Now was verified the prophecy of the Polish apocalypse: "The war of the future will be a war of sieges and entrenched positions. In the war of the future the advantage will always rest with the defensive. In the war of the future, frontal attacks, without immense superiority in numbers, will be impossible."

Every campaign, they say, has its lessons. This one we now find to be full of them, so full indeed that it has necessarily taken our Generals some time to become acquainted even with their grammar. When the war was forced upon us by the Pretoria oligarchy for the long-cherished purpose of ousting Great Britain from South Africa, many of the authorities were of opinion that a rabble of undisciplined farmers would be incapable of offering any formidable resistance to the superior military system of Great Britain. Not a hint of doubt as to the success of our arms and the effectiveness of our war apparatus was entertained. When Colonials in the summer of '99 volunteered their services, the Government received the offers with a sniff. Later they accepted them with grateful thanks. It was never imagined that colonists could know anything of the art of war, or that they might teach a lesson or two even to that august institution the Staff College. Those who knew ventured to suggest that in South Africa the same cast-iron principles that existed in European warfare would be valueless, and that the lessons of Ingogo and Majuba in '81 might be repeated in '99 in all their dire and dismal reality. But these pessimists were scoffed at. They therefore waited, and hoped against hope. Now and then they feebly wondered by what process infantry, arriving two months late, when the enemy had had time to entrench the whole country at various naturally strong strategic points, would be able to overcome the disadvantages attendant on immobility. But they were silenced by a look. British pluck and endurance might be calculated upon to surmount everything and anything—some said! No one seemed to care to tackle the problem of how men on foot would be enabled to compete creditably, in anything like equal numbers, with a mounted enemy possessing more than ordinary mobility.

A mounted enemy has many advantages in his favour. He can select his own position, he can place all his force *en masse* into the fighting line, he can so pick his positions that one man on the defensive can make himself the equal of three men of the attacking force; and, besides, he can occupy a length of position which must extend his flanks far beyond those of the attackers on foot. These in consequence are either forced to extend to equal length, at almost certain risk of being unable to reinforce any weak point developed during the attack, and thereby cause the attack to be broken at

The Situation

points; or they have to "contain" only a portion of the enemy in position, and perhaps leave his wings—or one wing—free to execute an outflanking movement. It is impossible when a line extends for miles, and the enemy's strength is not discoverable before the heat of the engagement, for infantry to come from a great distance to the assistance of weak points; and by reason of this immobility it is equally impossible for infantry in the heat of action, and when the front is extended for miles, to suddenly change a plan of attack in time to save a situation.

The task set before our Generals was, therefore, almost superhuman: they were expected to make up for want of mobility with superior strategical qualifications; but, as has been said, no committee of Generals could at this juncture have decided on a strategy applicable to the complicated situation. That the Boer was a born strategist, and had able advisers, was amply proved. The amalgam of Boer methods, with Zulu theories and modern German tactics, was sufficient to try the most ingenious intelligence. For instance, the Boers in early days selected positions on the sides and tops of kopjes, and at the commencement of the campaign, at Talana Hill and at Elandslaagte, they were so perched, in accordance with the primitive principles of their race. They ignored the fact that such positions were the worst they could select against artillery fire with percussion fuses. Even for their own rifle practice such positions were also the worst, as, firing down at an angle, their bullets as a rule ran the chance of ploughing the earth without ricocheting, and served only to hit the one man aimed at. They worked, and still work, on the old Zulu principle of putting their whole strength into the fighting line, acting on the Zulu axiom, "Let it thunder—and pass." A sound principle this, no doubt, but one which our ponderous military machinery would not allow us to adopt. To these early methods, and to his native "slimness" and cunning, the Boer now added some German erudition. The influence of German officers and German tactics began to work changes curious and inexplicable. The Boers built scientific entrenchments, no longer on the kopjes alone but also below them, thus reducing the effect of hostile artillery, save that of howitzers, and permitting their sharpshooters to sweep the plain with a hurricane from their Mausers. In addition to this they built long castellated trenches, perfect underground avenues, to allow of the invisible massing of troops at any given point. They were also provided with ingenious gun-trenches, quite hidden, along which their Nordenfeldt gun, that pumped five shells in rapid succession, could be removed swiftly from one spot to another, and thereby defeat the efforts of the British gunners to locate it.

Thus it will be seen a new complexion was put upon Boer affairs. Novel and trying conditions were imposed on those who already had

The Transvaal War

to cope with the problem of how to match in mobility a rival who brought to his support six legs, while the British only brought two. Whole armies consisting merely of mounted infantry and artillery had never before come into action, and it began to be understood that a war against bushwhackers, guerillas, and sharpshooters, plus the most expensive guns modernity could provide, was a matter more serious than any with which the nineteenth century had hitherto had to deal. We had to learn that sheer pluck, endurance, and brute force were unavailing, and that strategy of the hard and fast kind—the red-tape strategy of the Staff College—was about as unpractical as a knowledge of the classics to one who goes a-marketing. There is no finality in the art of war, and nations, be they ever so old and wise and important, must go on learning.

One of the newer questions was, how far personal intelligence might be distributed among a body of men? The General as a head, the Staff Officers as nerves that convey volition to the different members, we had accepted, but how far individual acumen was needed to insure success now began to be argued. Certain it was that in this campaign we had opportunities for studying the comparative value of individual discretion *versus* "fighting to order." The Boers, every one of them, were working for themselves, absolutely for hearth and home, though perhaps under a general plan which certainly served to harass and annoy and keep the British army in a dilemma; while we laboured on a consolidated system which, if not obsolete, was certainly inappropriate. However, as there was no use in bemoaning our reverses, we began to congratulate ourselves on having discovered the cause of them. It was decided that first there must be more troops sent out to meet the extended nature of our operations, and that these troops must be accompanied by a sufficient number of horses to insure the necessary mobility, without which even the brute force of our numbers would be useless.

Of the successful issue of future proceedings none had a doubt. All knew that the finest strategy in the world must be useless when tools were wanting, and all felt certain that the admirable abilities of our Generals, when once the means of playing their war game came to hand, were bound to rise to the prodigious task still in store.

But for the dire necessity of the three gallant towns—Mafeking, Kimberley, and Ladysmith—a waiting game would have been possible and wise. The Boer stores of food and ammunition would eventually have run out, and the guns gone the way of much-used guns. Trek-oxen, instead of dragging the waggons of their masters, would have had to go to feed the hungry commandoes, and the history of slow exhaustion would have had to be told. But—again there was the great But!—those three valiant towns were holding

The Situation

out their hands, they were crying for help, they were standing in their hourly peril hopeful and brave because they believed—they were certain—that we should never desert them!

At home the grievous news of the reverse was digested by the public with dumb, almost paralysed resignation. At first it was scarcely possible to believe that the great, the long-anticipated move for the relief of Ladysmith had proved a failure, and that the Boers were still masters of the situation, and moreover the richer by eleven of our much-needed guns. By degrees the terrible truth began to be accepted by us. By degrees the Government awakened to the fact that the fighting of the Dutchmen within the region of Natal meant more than the pitting of one Briton against two Boers, that it meant the dashing of a whole Army Corps against Nature's strongholds, our own by right of purchase and blood, and captured from us merely by reason of neglect and delay!

To awake, however, was to act. In our misfortune it was pleasant to recall the words of Jomini, when speaking of Frederick the Great and his defeats in Silesia. "A series of fortunate events," he said, "may dull the greatest minds, deprive them of their natural vigour, and level them with common beings. But adversity is a tonic capable of bringing back energy and elasticity to those who have lost it." The tonic was sipped. Jomini's theories were proved! Though Great Britain through a series of fortunate events—a long reign of comparative peace—had become lethargic and money-grubbing, she, at the first shock of adversity, regained all her elasticity, vigour, and natural spirit of chivalry. Promptly the entire nation nerved itself to prove that, as of old, it was equal to any struggle, any sacrifice. The whole country seemed with one consent to leap to arms.

The Militia, nine battalions of Infantry, was now permitted to volunteer for service in any part of the Queen's dominions where such services might be wanted, while it was arranged that specially selected contingents of Yeomanry and Volunteers would start for the Front as soon as there were found ships sufficient to carry them.

Noble as amazing was the hurried response of the Volunteers to the intimation that their services would be accepted for the war. Hastily they pressed forward in crowds to enroll themselves. Their promptitude was goodly to look upon and to read of, for it showed that, in spite of the theories of Tolstoi and the influence of the spirit of modernity, patriotism is inherent and not a mere exotic or cultivated sentiment in the British race. We now found that though many traditions may be worn to rags, those of the British army had grown, like old tapestry, the more precious for the passage of time.

The Transvaal War

Still the military position was pregnant with anxieties. A horse that is left at the post may perhaps win in the end, but his chances of success are remote. An army that lands in dribblets three months after time is scarcely calculated to succeed against a rival army which has spent that interval in equipping itself for the fray. We were forced to remember that at the onset our officers were placed in the most dangerous positions, with inadequate support and no prospect of reinforcement, until their energies, mental and physical, had been sapped by undue and prolonged strain. On the north Tuli had but a handful of troops to resist an enormous and powerful enemy; Mafeking was surrounded, isolated, and able only to resist to the death the persistent attacks of shot and shell; Vryburg was allowed to be treacherously given away to the enemy; and Kimberley was left in the lurch as it were, to fight or fall according to the pluck of those who were ready to exhaust their vitality in loyalty to the Queen. On the Natal side things were still worse. The country, every inch of which is familiar to the Boer, had almost invited invasion. The whole strength of Boers and Free Staters was permitted to launch itself against an army which was entirely without reserves, and which could not be reinforced under a month. That brave and unfortunate soldier, Sir George Colley, had a theory that small, well-organised troops were worth as much again as large and desultory ones; but he took no account of peculiar facilities which are almost inherent to armies fighting on their own soil, as it were, and habits of warfare which have, so to speak, become ancestral with the Boer. From old time the Dutchman has employed his mountain fastnesses, his boulders, and his tambookie grass as screens and shelters, till in war the "tricks of the trade" have become a second nature to him, and serve in place of more complicated European methods. The small Natal army was, on Sir George Colley's principle, allowed to pit itself against a fighting mass, dense and desultory it may be, but a fighting mass of enormous dimensions, which, whatever their failings, had weight, equipment, courage, obstinacy, and intimacy with their surroundings entirely in their favour. That the enemy was first in the field they had to thank the original promoters of war, the Peace party—the humanitarian persons who so long hampered reason by loud outcries against the shedding of blood that their own countrymen in the Transvaal were condemned to all the tortures of suspense, to be aggravated later by all the agonies of famine and disease. Their own countrywomen and their babes were saved from shot and shell to be sent defenceless and homeless to wander the world till the charity of strangers or the relief of death should overtake them, while the loyal natives were left in a state of trepidation and

The Situation

suspense, without protection, yet forbidden to raise a hand in their own defence.

Reason now had its way. But remedies cannot be applied in a moment, and the public, which is always wise after the event, vented its anguish and its feelings of suspense by indulging in criticism, or in asking questions which, of course, could not be answered till the principal persons concerned were able to take part in the catechism. For instance, some of the riddles buzzed about in club and railway carriage were : Why did Sir Redvers Buller make a frontal attack across an open plain against an enemy admirably entrenched, and posted in a position not only made strong by art but by nature ? Why was it that the Government, in spite of the warnings given by Sir Alfred Milner while he was in England in May '99, neglected to take such precautions as would have prevented the enemy from being entirely in advance of us in the matter of time ? Why, also, were the Boers permitted to arm themselves with the most expensive modern weapons, to be used against us, under the very eye of our representative in Pretoria, without our being warned of the inferior quality of our own guns, and of the impossibility of making ourselves a match for the enemy so long as the cheese-paring policy of the authorities at home was countenanced ? Why, with an Intelligence Department in working order, was it never discovered that united Free State and Transvaal Dutchmen would vastly outnumber all the troops we were prepared—or, rather, unprepared—to put in the field, the troops we strove to make sufficient till the strain of reverse forced from us the acceptance of help from the Colonies, the Militia, and the Volunteers ?

The great question of reinforcements filled all minds. Nothing indeed could be looked for till they should reach the Cape. Fifteen huge transports were due to arrive between the end of December and the beginning of January, bringing on the scene some 15,000 troops of all arms. The Fifth Division, under Sir Charles Warren, consisting of eight battalions of Infantry and its complement of Artillery and Engineers was expected, also the Household Cavalry Composite Regiment, the 14th Hussars, a siege train, a draft of Marines, and various odd branches of the service. Later on more troops would follow, but pending the arrival of the warrior cargoes it was impossible for our Generals to do more than act on the defensive, and consider themselves fortunate if they could prevent the further advance of the enemy to the south.

But the most momentous move of the closing year was the departure of Lord Roberts for the seat of war. Here was this gallant officer, whose life had been devoted to the service of his country, and who was at an age when many other men would have elected to stay by hearth and home, suddenly called on

The Transvaal War

to act in the most difficult and trying crisis. And, in the very hour that he was asked to rouse himself to meet the call of Queen and country, he was dealt a crushing blow. His gallant son, the only one, and one well worthy to have worn the laurels of his noble father, besides adding to them by his own splendid acts, was carried off, a victim to the severe wound he received at Colenso. Here was a supreme trial, so supreme indeed that none dared touch it. All, even Lord Roberts's sincerest friends, shrunk from dwelling on the agony of mind that must have been endured by this great hero when at the same moment the voice of duty and the cry of domestic love jarred in conflict. On the one side he was called upon to brace himself to meet a political situation fraught with all manner of indescribable complications, while on the other, human nature with a thousand clinging tendrils drew him towards the numbness of mute woe or the consolation of private tears. But, like the great warrior he is, he got into harness and started off, leaving his misery in the hands of the great British people, who held it as their own. The "send off" they gave him at Waterloo Station was one of the most remarkable outbursts of public feeling on record, and this was not only due to admiration for the conqueror of Kandahar, but to profound sympathy for the man and the father who was thus laying aside his private self and placing all his magnificent ability at the service of the Empire.

DOINGS AT CHIEVELEY

It was now found desirable to remove part of the camp about ten and a half miles to the south, to get out of range of the Boer big guns which commanded the position. The wounded were daily being sent off in train-loads to Maritzburg, many of them, in spite of being shot in two or three places, cheerful and anxious to return quickly "to be in at the death," as they sportingly described it. The funeral of Lord Roberts's gallant son caused a sense of deep depression to prevail in all ranks, for he was not only regretted by those who held his brilliant qualities in esteem, but in sympathy with the sore affliction which had befallen the veteran "Bobs," whose name, wherever Tommy goes, is one to conjure with. The ceremony was a most impressive one, and the pall-bearers were all men of young Roberts's corps. These were Major Prince Christian Victor, Colonels Buchanan-Riddell and Bewicke-Copley, and Major Stuart-Wortley.

The graves of all the unfortunate slain were marked round, covered with flowers, and temporary tablets arranged till suitable memorials should be prepared.

Meanwhile the Naval guns were unceasing in their activity, and made an appalling accompaniment to the afternoon siestas



MAP OF THE SEAT OF WAR. Scale 1 inch = 86 miles.

The Transvaal War

in which many, owing to the excessive heat, were inclined to indulge. For strategical reasons it was now found necessary to blow up the road-bridge over the Tugela, and thus prevent the Boers from advancing further to the south or spying upon our positions.

Extra precautions were taken in regard to the white flag. It began to be believed at last that the Boer would take an unfair advantage of the Briton whenever he should get a chance. Strangely enough, our officers seemed to have forgotten or disregarded the object-lesson of the tragic affair of Bronker's Spruit. Yet Boer "slimness" was then well enough established. The unfortunate Colonel Anstruther caused to be printed in the Transvaal Government *Gazette* a bi-lingual proclamation, informing the Boers that, in consequence of the many treacherous uses to which the white flag had been put, he would in future recognise the emblem only under the following conditions : two Boers accompanied by an officer, and all unarmed, must approach the lines bearing the white flag aloft. The British soldiers were also advised to keep well under cover whenever the flag was displayed. This showed that reliance on Boer honour would in no case be attempted. At the present date Boer morality had not improved, and it was even declared that the Free Staters had made their women boil down their national flag, so that in its pallid state it might at a little distance be mistaken for the white flag, and come in handy in case of need.

On the 20th of December a picket, consisting of seven men belonging to the 13th Hussars, was surprised some five miles from camp, in the direction of Weenen, by a party of sixty Boers. These cautiously crept round some kopjes to where the outpost was stationed. A smart tussle ensued. Two men were killed and seven horses were lost. No sooner had information of the fight reached camp than some of Bethune's and Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry were despatched to the rescue, but the Boers, on perceiving these reinforcements, quickly fled and thus escaped punishment.

At this time the second advance for the relief of Ladysmith was very secretly being organised, but no one knew exactly when Sir Redvers Buller meant to move, or whether he intended to give up the idea of a frontal attack altogether. Our Generals were criticised for making frontal attacks, but Clausewitz declares that the attempt to turn the flank of the enemy can only be justified by a great superiority ; this superiority may be either actual superiority of numbers, or it may follow from the way in which the lines of communication are placed. Unfortunately we had no favouring strength ; the Boers outnumbered us everywhere, and not only did they exceed us numerically, but their mobility enabled them so quickly to move from front to flank positions that they were, on desire, facing us at any moment. In

Doings at Chieveley

fact the Boer army had no flank, and therefore the vast amount of after-the-event wisdom which was gratuitously handed about by "the man in the street" was absolutely wasted.

An unfortunate incident now occurred. Capt. James Rutherford and Mr. Grenfell, S.A.L.H., while visiting the pickets, disappeared. They apparently rode into the midst of the enemy's scouts, who were everywhere prowling about, and were forced to surrender. The report of the capture was brought to the camp by native runners, who stated that the officers had been removed to Pretoria. However, for two gallant Britons lost there was one gained, for at the very time Mr. Winston Churchill had almost miraculously made himself free of his captors.

The story of his escape reads like a novel; but truth is stranger than fiction. When removed to Pretoria after the disaster to the armoured train at Chieveley, he almost gave up hope of escape; indeed he had every reason so to do, for on the 12th of December he was informed by the Transvaal Government's Secretary for War that there was little chance of his release. Whereupon, with many doubts and misgivings, he discussed with himself the best means of struggling for freedom. The State Schools Prison was well guarded; it was surrounded by a high wall, and the sentries were vigilant in the extreme. He formed for himself a plan, however, and once when the back of the sentry was momentarily turned he took his courage in both hands as the French say, rushed at the six-foot wall, scaled it, and let himself down into a neighbouring garden before his movement could be detected. The garden was the garden of an inhabited house. There were lights in the windows; more, there were visitors on the verandah, and presently, ramblers among the paths! Moments of horror as the escaped hid in the trees seemed to become years, discovery appeared to be merely a matter of moments. But evidently the Fates decided that so useful a member of creation—warrior, writer, and politician—could not be spared by society or his country, and in a little while Mr. Churchill found himself wandering, undisguised and unrecognised, through the streets of the town. Burghers passed him, passengers brushed his shoulders. Nobody asked his business. It was evident that Fate wanted him. The stars said so, and following their direction he struck out towards the Delagoa Railroad. He knew that he dared ask his way of none; he was aware that he must make the most of the cloak of night; he was intimate enough with Boer customs to be certain that in a few hours his description would be posted throughout the two Republics. The present, and only the present, was his. He walked along the line, evading the watchers on bridges and culverts, and determining to stick to the rails, without which he might find himself lost or wandering back in the teeth of the enemy. Once free of the town,

The Transvaal War

he bided his time cautiously in the neighbourhood of an adjacent station. There he watched the coming of a train, and just as it steamed past him, with an alacrity and agility born of sheer despair, he made a leap towards a truck, grabbed at a hook on the edge, boarded it, and was soon burrowing deep in a cargo of coal-sacks. There he lay, grimy, exhausted, and almost distraught, but happy. He was free. Every minute the anxiety for freedom had grown within him, till now, fighting his way towards it, it had become an almost savage passion. He had decided he would never go back. No one should capture him. But this was easier to swear than to accomplish. To escape detection it was necessary again to risk his life—to leap off the train as he had leapt on it, while the machinery was in full swing and the driver ignorant of the existence of his distinguished passenger. Before dawn, therefore, he emerged from the coal-heap, and with a flying leap landed flat on the railroad. He gathered himself together, and by sunrise was concealed in a wood, his only companion for some time being a vulture. The sojourn in the cool boskage of the Transvaal was fraught with good luck, and at dusk when the fugitive emerged he was another man. At last he was able to gather his forces together for another trip on a passing train. There was always danger though—danger because it was necessary to hug the line, and where the line was, there also were railway guards, or at least humanity—inimical humanity, who most probably were plotting his ruin. Plod, plod, plod; so passed the hours, scrambling along in the dead of night through sluits and dongas in the effort to avoid the direct neighbourhood of huts, bridges, stations, and yet keep in touch with the winding iron track that led to the longed-for sea. For five days and nights he persevered, tramping after dark and sneaking under cover all day, and dimly conscious that the hue and cry had gone forth, and that every man's hand in the enemy's country was now turned against him. On the sixth day he managed again with amazing good fortune to safely board a train, and this time it was one going from Middleburg to Delagoa Bay. Again he burrowed among sacks and carefully hid himself, so carefully, indeed, that owing to his extreme precaution discovery was evaded. The train was searched, the sacks were prodded. Deep down, scarcely daring to breathe, lay the man they were seeking—an inch or two off—just an inch or two off. He drew a long breath and praised God for his escape. After that he passed some sixty hours in all the agonies of suspense. Famine and thirst preyed on him, and active horror lest all his exertions should be in vain, lest, at the very last moment, the whole struggle of hope and wretchedness would end in dire and fatal disaster. But he was preserved. He arrived at Lourenço Marques on the 21st of December, and from there proceeded to Natal. "I am very weak,

Doings at Chieveley

but I am free." Such were the words of his telegram; no wired words ever meant more. "I have lost many pounds in weight, but I am lighter in heart; and I avail myself of this moment, which is a witness to my earnestness, to urge an unflinching and uncompromising prosecution of the war." In regard to Mr. Winston Churchill's arrival among his friends in Natal, an eye-witness wrote:—

"The 23rd of December last was a memorable day at Durban, perhaps the most memorable since that on which the Boers' ultimatum was published. From Lourenço Marques had come the exciting intelligence that young Winston Churchill, a distinguished member of a world-renowned race, had succeeded in evading his jailers at Pretoria, and, after a series of thrilling adventures, had arrived safely at Delagoa Bay. The telegrams had further announced that the hero had immediately shipped on board the Rennie liner *Induna* and would land at Durban that very afternoon. The fame of Mr. Churchill as a soldier and an author was already established. The history of his gallantry both in India and at Omdurman was already well known to every good Natalian before he first stepped ashore there as one of the war correspondents of the *Morning Post*. His subsequent courageous conduct at Chieveley at the unfortunate incident of the armoured train and his capture by the Boers, now capped by his marvellous escape from Pretoria, had set Durban agog with excitement, and filled all and sundry with hearty desires to afford him a right royal welcome on his landing again on British soil.

"The brilliant summer sunshine, tempered by a fresh sea-breeze which sent a soft ripple across the deep blue surface of the magnificent harbour; the bold headland of the bluff contrasting vividly against the streets of iron-roofed dwellings in the township; the large numbers of ocean-going steamers and sailing craft, gay with bunting; the eager, expectant crowd of every class of society, from gaily-dressed ladies to wharf labourers, refugees, and Kaffirs in but shirts and trousers, all contributed to the completion of a picturesque panorama never to be forgotten. Long before midday did we assemble in our thousands. When it was whispered about that the *Induna* would berth alongside the steamer *Inchanga*, and that Mr. Churchill must cross the decks of the *Inchanga* before stepping ashore, a rush was made for her, and, in spite of all the efforts of the officers and crew, the crowd swarmed like bees on her. They took possession of every available point of vantage; they invaded the sacred precincts of the captain's bridge; they braved the perils of the rigging; they huddled together on the 'fo'cas'le'; they filled every boat; and, heedless of fresh paint, they clung affectionately to the ventilators and the funnel.

"After having been several times reported the *Induna* rounded the point at half-past two. Amid breathless expectation she steamed slowly across the harbour. Standing beside the captain on the bridge a smallish, clean-shaven man was descried, and the crowd at once recognised him as the hero whom they had assembled to honour. A thousand good British cheers broke the silence, a thousand lusty throats shouted a heartfelt welcome. But this was not all. The sturdy Natalians did not stop at shouting. The moment the *Induna* was moored Mr. Churchill, smiling, was seized bodily by twenty pairs of brawny arms, was patted and thumped on the back by hundreds of applauding hands, and finally, after being nearly strangled by over-zealous admirers who were waving hats and handkerchiefs and crying 'Bravo!' and 'Well done!' he was carried shoulder-high across the decks of the *Inchanga* and deposited in a ricksha, whence a speech was demanded. In a few modest sentences Mr.

The Transvaal War

Churchill good-humouredly narrated some of the more prominent episodes of his exploit, and a start was made for his hotel, the ricksha-boy being assisted more or less by some fifty amateur ricksha-men and escorted by a majority of the crowd. After picking up the editor of the *Natal Mercury* on the way, and installing him in state by the side of Mr. Churchill, the hotel was at last reached, and the demand for another speech having been acceded to, Mr. Churchill was permitted at four o'clock to retire from the public gaze. The same night he left Durban for the front."

The following is a copy of the letter written by Mr. Winston Churchill to Mr. de Souza prior to escaping from prison :—

"STATE SCHOOLS PRISON, PRETORIA.

"DEAR MR. DE SOUZA,—I do not consider that your Government was justified in holding me, a press correspondent and a non-combatant, as a prisoner, and I have consequently resolved to escape. The arrangements I have succeeded in making with my friends outside are such as to give me every confidence. But I wish, in leaving you thus hastily and unceremoniously, to once more place on record my appreciation of the kindness which has been shown me and the other prisoners by you, by the commandant, and by Dr. Gunning, and my admiration of the chivalrous and humane character of the Republican forces. My views on the general question of the war remain unchanged, but I shall always retain a feeling of high respect for the several classes of the Burghers I have met, and on reaching the British lines I will set forth a truthful and impartial account of my experiences in Pretoria. In conclusion, I desire to express my obligations to you, and to hope that when this most grievous and unhappy war shall have come to an end, a state of affairs may be created which shall preserve the national pride of the Boers and the security of the British, and put a final stop to the rivalry and enmity of both races. Regretting that circumstances have not permitted me to bid you a personal farewell, believe me, yours very sincerely,

"WINSTON CHURCHILL.

"December 11, 1899."

CHRISTMAS AT THE CAPE AND NATAL

We had arrived at what might be termed a breathing spell. There was no serious movement in the direction of the Modder River, and Lord Methuen was evidently biding his time. General Gatacre felt himself too weak to take up any very active or offensive step, while General French contented himself with such harassing and cleverly annoying operations as kept the enemy, like a man with a mosquito round his nose, from napping. There was great hope of better things, however, for it was known that the *Dunottar Castle* had left England and was conveying to the Cape—in addition to Lord Roberts—Lord Kitchener and Major-General T. Kelly-Kenny, the Commander of the Sixth Division. Besides these were the following officers of Lord Roberts's Staff :—Major-General G. T. Pretzman ; Colonel Viscount Downe, C.I.E. ; Major H. V. Cowan ; Captain A. C. M. Waterfield ; Major J. F. R. Henderson ; Major C. V. Hume ; Brevet-Major G. F.

Christmas at the Cape and Natal

Gorringe, D.S.O.; Colonel Lord Erroll; Commander the Hon. S. J. Fortescue (Naval Adviser to Lord Roberts); Captain Lord Herbert Scott; Captain Lord Settrington.

This showed that when at last we set to work we did so with a will. The forces in South Africa before the war had amounted to 25,000, which number was augmented by 55,000 on the arrival of the First Army Corps. Late in December came the Fifth Division of about 11,000, under Sir Charles Warren, followed by the Sixth Division of 10,000 men. The Seventh and Eighth Divisions of 10,000 men respectively were shortly to increase the forces at the disposal of Lord Roberts, together with some 2000 additional Cavalry, 10,000 Yeomanry, 9000 Volunteers, seven battalions of Militia, drafts for regiments at the front amounting to 10,000, and about 20,000 local forces. The first Colonial contingents consisted of about 2500 men, and these were to be followed by second contingents of like strength. The Naval Brigade was composed of about 1000; so that in all, roughly estimated, we were on the eve of putting 184,000 men into the field.

Christmas day at the Cape was solemnised with much speechifying, both from Dutch pulpits and Dutch partisans, and not a few peacefully disposed persons in this time of general goodwill lugged in Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman by the ears and quoted him to suit their purpose. That amiable worthy had said the war could have been avoided, and that cheap and incontrovertible statement the Bond got hold of and chewed and rolled on the tongue as an accompaniment to its plum-pudding and mince-pies. Of course, the war could have been avoided. Of course, it would have been quite possible to voluntarily retire from the Cape and allow South Africa to become entirely Dutch. In the same way we could give up governing India and hand it over to Russia and confine our expenses and our energies to Great Britain, the water supply, the development of national cookery, and the propagation of cabbages. But peace with dishonour was fortunately not to the taste of the British public, and those who spent their Yuletide in active service were far too devoted to the sacred duty of maintaining the prestige of the Empire to sigh for the domestic hearth and regal sirloin that might have been theirs had the Government extended its accommodating apathy a few months longer.

There were no holly decorations and displays of bunting, no rubbings of hands and vigorous snow-balling, because the South African sun blazed with the glare of beaten brass, and the thermometer stood to the height of some 100 degrees at midday. But there was a vast amount of joke-making and hearty goodwill nevertheless, and many prayers for friends and family and Queen.

The Transvaal War

In Natal there were lively doings in honour of the festal season. At a time when even cracker manufacturers wax poetic, the journalistic poets thought it their duty to burst into rhyme. The Natal papers indulged in some jocose doggerel, which would have been comic had it not been deeply tragic. The lines ran thus: "To Ladysmith"—the only lines, by-the-bye, that did run there—

" ' Hold the Fort, for I am coming,'
Says the helio—
Quick as light the answer flashes,
' Ain't you coming slow? ' "

But Tommy was pleased and thought the stanza a capital joke. He meant to get there directly, and merely quoted the proverb about "slow and shure"—there were so many Irishmen about, fine fellows, who believed in themselves and they were shure about everything. They had nothing to do with doubt, for doubt, after all, is the mother of diffidence!

And some of these rollicking youngsters managed to retain their native good-humour in most distressing circumstances. A good story was told of one gallant private in hospital who had lost his leg but persisted in apostrophising the missing limb whenever it ached. "Be aisy wid ye. Can't ye be quiet? Ye'll niver take me into the foight again. Ohovo!"

Other examples of amazing good-temper and pluck on the part of the wounded filled all eye-witnesses with pathetic admiration. One man, a quondam music-hall singer, carried his jocose art into his sick-bed. A Boer prisoner had lost his arms, and the poor fellow helplessly shook his head when offered tobacco. But the music-hall singer saw the shake of the head and tearful eye that accompanied it. In a moment, with gymnastic dexterity, he had placed his arms round the Boer and performed the office of the missing ones, giving the fellow the advantage of a good smoke. Another of our men who had lost his right arm co-operated with a Boer who had lost his left, and between them they rolled cigarettes to the great satisfaction of both. While they were in hospital another sufferer pretended to be in no way depressed by the loss of his arm, and ventured on mild whimsicalities regarding the economy of being able to share a single pair of gloves with any right-handed man who might also have lost a limb!

On the whole, well or ill, Tommy was temporarily in clover. The fat of the land was being sent out by fervent admirers at home. Indeed he was getting somewhat inundated with worsted goods which the fair hands of his countrywomen had been devotedly manufacturing. Jack Tar, despite his magnificent work, was not so highly distinguished, at least so he thought, and occasionally



LIEUT.-GENERAL FORRESTIER WALKER, K.C.B.

Commanding the Lines of Communication.

Photo by Elliott & Fry, London.

Christmas at the Cape and Natal

vented his disgust into private ears. But, as one of them said, they'd had a treat for Christmas—the treat of a wash! It was bathing under difficulties, however, for one half of the men had to keep guard with loaded rifles while the other half wallowed in water that, in harmony with the general scheme of things in camp, was also of kharki hue!

Tommy at the front was externally scarcely the Tommy of our acquaintance. His bright spick and span exterior was gone. Kharki had sobered him and planed down his individuality. His uniform no longer sat without a crease. It was washed and worn and shrunken from hard and honourable usage, and his carriage was no longer the carriage of Tommy on parade. He seemed to have taken a leaf out of Jack's book, and the slight slouch became him well. It gave him the air of a workman and an individual, and seemed to point to the fact that there was no longer occasion for him to be judged by appearances. We knew the inner man now. He did his duty grandly, and his splendid courage and perseverance had made him independent of the pomp and panoply of war. In the matter of "grit" they were all alike. But in externals they had curious differences, their characteristics varying considerably according to the regiment to which they belonged. Some were dapper still—the newly arrived ones—with hair clipped to an eighth of an inch for head and half an inch for moustache; others had succumbed to circumstances, and had grown beards of odd sizes and shapes and colours (scumbled in all cases with dust), while the youngsters displayed an unhappy medium, styled by an officer "pieces of unexpected wool," on promiscuous parts of their faces! Still, when all was said, joviality and "grit" put an identical veneer on them all!

The officers too were transmogrified. They were dressed exactly like the men. Tan brown belts, swords, and revolvers were no longer in evidence. When going off to war, or any other duty at all under arms, each officer arrayed himself in his servant's belt and equipment—stained with clay paste to the prevalent dust or kharki colour—and took with him his servant's rifle and one hundred rounds of ammunition. There was a difference without a distinction. The officer carried a field-glass, and this when not in use was concealed in a coat-pocket. Every precaution was now adopted to prevent them from inviting an undue share of attention. The mounted officers had carbines—neat, handy weapons, which slipped into a leather carbine bucket in the saddle, on the other side of which went the very necessary wire-cutters. Barbed wire entanglements were so much a part of the Boer programme—"to cheer you up in crossing the drifts," some one said—that the cutters became an essential part of warlike gear. A strange innovation this; very

The Transvaal War

small but very full of meaning. The Boers were teaching us a great deal. We were beginning to understand, almost to admire, their curious modes of warfare—their strange ability to “sit tight,” wire themselves in, and yet to fly away! Years ago, when some tactician ventured to say that the war of the future embraced only the question of long-range rifles and wire-entangled trenches, we were inclined to pooh-pooh! Now we were beginning to see wisdom in this stubborn and persistent, and yet skittishly mobile foe! When we looked at our wire nippers and their strong entrenchments we began to formulate the war motto of the future, which resolves itself into five words: “Six legs and a spade!” The sword, the bayonet, the cavalry charge were passing away for ever. Here the dignified charger was ill-matched with the nimble steed of the country, and many officers were only too glad to supplement their English horses with Basuto ponies—to secure four serviceable and sure legs, as the climate and other circumstances contrived to wear out those of their British beasts. Fortunately there was still a plentiful choice in horse-flesh, what with British and Australian and Argentine specimens, but the Basuto ponies were the most knowing and handy for the purposes required. The imported horse, it was discovered, needed a long and probationary period to make him at home on the South African veldt. Like other aristocratical creatures, he was unequal to the hand-to-mouth existence of the African-born animal, who, by habit and instinct, could shift for himself. He was neither knowing nor cautious, having been unaccustomed to ground honeycombed with mole-holes, sluits, and other obstacles, or to the trick of rolling on the veldt and picking up his meals haphazard from the first bush he came across. Hence it became evident that horses in plenty must be forthcoming if we were ever to remedy our deficiencies and make our progress something other than the steam-roller style of progress to which we had been accustomed.

CHAPTER II

MAFEKING

PLUCKY little Mafeking continued to hold its own, and not merely to hold its own, but to make itself dauntlessly aggressive. Continual sorties took place, and indeed formed part of the routine of daily life. Commandant Cronje now sent in a communication disputing the right of the British to use dynamite in any way in the operations for the defence of the town; but Colonel Baden-Powell was inclined for deeds, not arguments, so Cronje was silenced. The town was enlivened by a great concert, in which the National Anthem was sung with fervour and intense significance. This showed without doubt that Mafeking meant to fight so long as breath should last. In regard to provisions and water, the garrison was getting on well. The art of dodging shells, said one officer, was being carried to a state of great perfection, and the fighting was being conducted in strict accordance with military etiquette, Commandant Cronje always giving due notice of bombardment!

For some time after Colonel Walford's gallant defence of Cannon Kopje on the 31st October, nothing much occurred. The losses from this attack were more than at first supposed. Captain the Hon. H. Marsham, as we know, was killed, and Captain Pechell, who was hit in the abdomen by a piece of shell, succumbed to his injuries. Sergeant Lloyd, who did splendid service with the Red Cross company, was struck while attending to the wounded, and died. Trooper Nicholas, whose arm was shattered, succumbed owing to shock to the system. A trooper who was hit by a bullet in the collar-bone escaped death miraculously. Fortunately, Lieutenants Brady and Dawson, who were also injured, were getting on well.

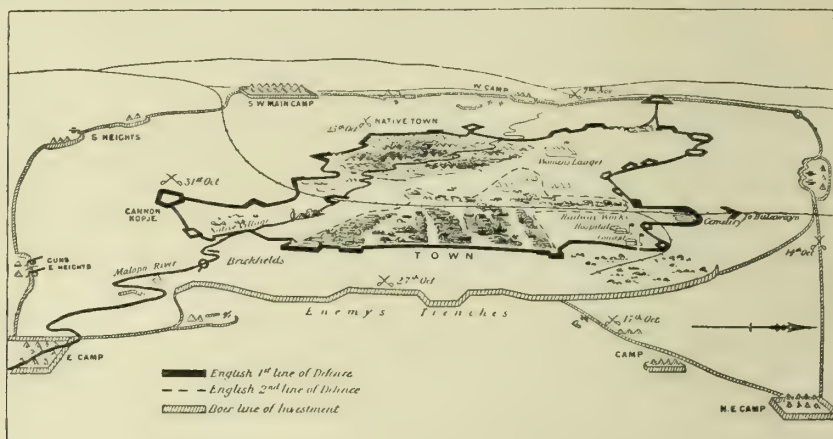
Among the marvellous escapes recorded, and these were not a few, was one of a negro who was shot through the brain by a bullet. The projectile passed through one temple and lodged in the other, yet the man still survived, and showed a decided intention to recover. There is an old story of a Jamaica negro who fell from a tree without injury, and when asked how he escaped, he explained his good fortune by saying, "Tank God, me fall on me head!" The invulnerability of the nigger cranium in that case, as in this, had its advantages, and it would be interesting if some of our

The Transvaal War

specialists—say Dr. Horsley—would account for the rough-and-tumble superiority of blacks over whites.

On the 1st of November a lamentable incident occurred. Parslow, the correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, was shot by a member of the garrison. The following is an extract from a letter relating to the sad affair, which was in the possession of the Editor of the *Daily Chronicle* :—

“MAFEKING, November 19.—One item, the most unpleasant of the whole beleaguement, occupied attention during last week—that is, the court-martial of Lieutenant Murchison for the murder of Mr. Parslow,



THE SIEGE OF MAFEKING

TOPOGRAPHICAL SKETCH SHOWING THE BRITISH AND BOER POSITIONS

From a sketch by a British officer brought by runner to Buluwayo

special war correspondent of the London *Daily Chronicle*. He was a genial, good-humoured young fellow, and asked Murchison, an artilleryman of ability and undoubted courage, to dine with him. After dinner Mr. Parslow strolled with Murchison across the Market Square towards Dixon's Hotel, the headquarters of the Staff, the ostensible purpose being for both of them to obtain a copy of the orders for the day, usually issued about that time—half-past nine or ten o'clock P.M. Some words ensued apparently during the few minutes occupied in reaching Dixon's. Parslow left his companion in the passage of the hotel, and was passing out, when it is alleged that Murchison drew his revolver and shot him dead, the bullet entering his head on the occipital protuberance an inch or an inch and a half behind the left ear, and lodging against the base of the skull. The case is completed, and the court closed to consider the verdict."

The young journalist was exceedingly popular and deeply regretted. He was buried with military honours on the evening of

Mafeking

the 2nd. His coffin was covered with the Union Jack, and carried to the grave by Major Baillie of the *Morning Post*, Mr. Angus Hamilton of the *Times*, Mr. Hellawell of the *Daily Mail*, Mr. Reilly of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and the correspondent of the Press Association. The funeral was attended by many members of the Staff, who were desirous of showing their esteem for the promising and gallant writer.

The enemy now engaged in hostilities under the command of the son of Cronje, who was said to have had, in the interval, a *passage d'armes* with his father, the General, the younger man having taunted the elder for not having succeeded in reducing Mafeking to submission. Whereupon Cronje *filis* undertook to do the great deed himself, and in setting about it managed to get killed. The Boers again stormed the place, and were driven back in confusion by the magnificent energy of the British South African Police, leaving strewn on the field of action an enormous number of dead and wounded. Their removal occupied two hours. Captain Goodyear, commanding a squad of Cape "boys," made a dashing sortie, and received a wound in the leg, but he nevertheless captured the brickfields, and held them against the enemy, thus preventing him from utilising them for sniping operations.

Sunday the 5th of November was, as usual, observed as a day of truce. The enemy made an effort to defy the rules of Sabbath etiquette, and were informed, under a flag of truce, that if they should continue to erect works commanding the brickfields, the guns would open fire on them. This warning had the desired effect. The memory of Guy Fawkes, together with the news of our victories in Natal, was honoured by an exhibition of fireworks—a display which some thought rather *de trop* considering the nature of the daily operations in the town. On the following day the Boers made themselves unpleasantly obstreperous by saluting the place with quick-firing guns, weapons whose shells burst almost simultaneously with the report, thus depriving those aimed at of the chance of running to cover.

The air of Mafeking is said to be equal to champagne, and perhaps to its stimulating influence the garrison owed its sprightliness and activity. The little township "ran" a journal of its own, and though not so effervescent as *The Lyre* of Ladysmith, it had its humorous side. The *Mafeking Mail*, as it was called, was issued daily—shells permitting. Quoting from the *Mail* of the 1st of November, a facsimile of which was reproduced by the *Daily Telegraph*, we read that—

"We have borne the much-feared bombardment for a fortnight, and still Mafeking stands. From what we have experienced we do not consider ourselves too optimistic in anticipating a successful ending to the contest. For

The Transvaal War

the first time in the history of Boer warfare have the Boers been defeated at every turn by a force far inferior in point of numbers. Since the first attack on Saturday, October 14th, they fly directly our guns are heard. Safely out of range they fire into the town, but they do not appear to be pining for another attempt at storming Mafeking. In the 'general orders' issued last Sunday the following occurs:—"The Colonel Commanding having made a careful inspection of the defences of the town and the native stad, is now of opinion that no force that the Boers are likely to bring against us could possibly effect an entrance at any point.' Now, this is like the advertisements say a certain cocoa is—grateful and comforting, and we feel that having got so far through the ordeal, we have only to remain steadfast, as the matter of a little time will see decided the first great step towards the settlement of the future of South Africa. There is no doubt that the attention of Great Britain, the Colonies, in fact, the whole world, is now riveted upon this little spot, which is now playing a prominent part in the most important epoch in the history of this wonderful continent. We know there is no need to urge the claims of our country and kindred upon our gallant garrison. Being in such close touch with each other that nothing but the exceptional circumstances thrust upon us could have made possible, we are in a position to judge and recognise the steady determination that British blood and British pluck exhibit when such a crisis as the present arises, and we know that the memory of Bronkhurst Spruit, Majuba, and Potchefstroom will make that determination, supported by the knowledge of our grand successes of the past fortnight, more firm, more strong, and more united than has been before, and this, with the grand soldier who is in command here, will render certain the first stages towards the complete crushing of the enemy.

"There is no doubt that there was landed in South Africa by Sunday last a body of 57,000 men, including probably twelve or fourteen regiments of cavalry, twenty or twenty-two batteries of artillery, and forty regiments of infantry, besides, most likely, a body of mounted infantry. Of this force there will be not less than 15,000 disembarked at Cape Town and despatched on the road here. They may now be settling accounts with the Boers outside Kimberley, in which case Vryburg might be reached by Sunday, allowing for some delay at Fourteen Streams. When our troops reach Vryburg the air of Mafeking will not suit Cronje sprinters, so by *this day week* we may begin to wish them a pleasant journey back to the Transvaal. It will then be merely an interchange of courtesy if we return the visit.

"When the big gun with which the enemy hoped to pulverise us, and which has sent more shells in the neighbourhood of the hospital and women's laager than in any other parts of the town, is taken by our troops, we think it only fair to Mafeking that it should be brought here. It will make a good memorial and be an object lesson to succeeding generations, who, reading the history of our bombardment, and seeing the weapon employed against our women and children, will be able to judge of the nineteenth-century Boer's fitness to dominate such a territory as the Transvaal. Let it be placed, say, in the space opposite the entrance to the railway station, raised on end, with the unexploded shells piled at its base, with a description of Colonel Baden-Powell's clever defence of the place. We hope the Colonel will bear the town in mind when the disposal of the gun is under discussion.

"Major Lord E. Cecil, C.S.O., last evening issued the following under the heading of 'General Orders':"—

[Here was recorded Colonel Baden-Powell's appreciation of the action of Colonel Walford and his gallant men, which has been previously quoted.]

Mafeking

The perusal of the opening paragraphs of the *Mafeking Mail* serves to enlighten us as to the degrees of hope deferred through which the plucky inhabitants had to pass. The pathos of the expression, "So by this day week we may begin to wish them a pleasant journey back to the Transvaal," can only be understood by comparing the date to which it referred with that of the relief of the noble garrison—the 17th of May 1900!

On the 7th of November, the force under Major Godley and Captain Vernon made a successful sortie, the excellent management of which was recognised in an order issued by Colonel Baden-Powell:—

"The surprise against the enemy to the westward of the town was smartly and successfully executed at dawn this morning by a force under the direction of Major Godley. Captain Vernon's squadron of the Protectorate Regiment carried this operation out with conspicuous coolness and steadiness. The gunners, under Major Panzera, fought and worked their guns well under a very trying fire from the enemy. The Bechuanaland Rifles are to be congratulated on the efficient services rendered by them under Captain Cowan in this their first engagement in the field. The enemy appeared to have suffered severely, while our casualties were luckily very light. This is largely due to the fact that Major Godley delivered his blow suddenly and quickly, and withdrew his force again in good time and order. The Colonel Commanding has much pleasure in placing on record a plucky piece of work by Gunners R. Cowan and F. H. Godson. The Hotchkiss gun, of which they had charge, was overturned and its trail-hook broken in course of action. In spite of a very heavy fire from the enemy's one-pound Maxim and seven-pound Krupp, these men attached the trail to the limber by ropes, and brought the gun safely away."

At this time the town was surrounded by some 2000 Boers, and a heavy shell-fire was daily exchanged. The damage done, however, was slight, except in the case of the Convent, which seemed to be a favourite mark for the Boer gunners. The trenches of the besiegers had been moved to about 2000 yards of the town, and from here the enemy fired with rifles, but with indifferent success. The Boers, in fact, were getting disheartened. Colonel Baden-Powell was proving himself prepared to enter into a competitive examination on the subject of "slimness" with them, and they were somewhat disturbed at the intellectual strain demanded for rivalry against so smart a pupil. All manner of efforts were made, and there was even a Dutch council of war as to the propriety of making a midnight attack upon the place. But the wily Colonel was ready for them. He took care that lanterns should be placed

The Transvaal War

in suitable positions to illumine the paths of the would-be assailants, and when they turned on these lanterns the attention of their guns and broke them, more were immediately found to take their place. There was also the British bayonet in reserve, and a hint which they did not care to prove as a certainty—that dynamite was somewhere or other arranged in a ring round the place, so that at a given sign the too pressing attentions of intruders might be disposed of. These some one called “the B. P. Surprise



OUTPOST AND ENTRENCHMENT, SOUTHERN FORT, MAFEKING

Packets,” which were arranged on the lucky-tub principle, ready for those who might venture on an experimental dive. The exact locality was not disclosed, in order that their whereabouts might prove a never-ending source of wonder and interest to the besiegers.

As before said, continual sorties took place, and Colonel Baden-Powell succeeded in capturing mules and horses from the enemy and generally harassing him. Great expectations sustained the gallant little party that Colonel Plumer's force would shortly make its way from the north and join hands with Colonel Baden-Powell. Early in November the opposing forces stood thus :—

Kuruman and Elsewhere

Colonel Baden-Powell, with 500 Cavalry, 200 Cape Mounted Police, and B.S.A. Company's Mounted Police, 60 Volunteers, six machine-guns, two 7-pounders, and 200 to 300 townsmen used to arms	1500
1000 Transvaal Boers under Commandant Cronje, and 500 Boers at Maritzani	1500

But later, some of the Boers were drawn off for service in the south.

KURUMAN AND ELSEWHERE

Of the diminutive town of Kuruman and its gallant struggle little can be said. The garrison—consisting of seventy-five British subjects, including the men that came from Bastards—under the command of Captain Baker stood out valiantly, fighting with rare obstinacy, and hoping that British success elsewhere would speedily draw off the intermittent attentions of the Boers. From the 13th to the 20th of November a strong party of Dutchmen kept up incessant pressure, but they were forced to retreat, though both sides suffered loss. On the part of the British one special constable was killed.

The official details of the defence showed that the Mission Station which was formerly the centre of Dr. Moffat's long work among the natives of that part of Africa was the point of resistance to the Boer attack. When the Dutch commandant notified the magistrate of his intention to occupy the place, the latter replied that he had orders to defend it. Thereupon he collected twenty natives and thirty half-castes, with whose aid he barricaded the Mission Chapel, and there resisted the assault of 500 Boers for six days and nights, after which the Boers abandoned the attack.

To look back on the amazing valour of the tiny garrison, unsuccessful though it was, makes every British heart swell with pride. On the outbreak of hostilities, Mr. Hilliard, the Resident Magistrate, called a meeting of the inhabitants, and eloquently urged them to remain loyal. This, as we know, they did, with the result that the place resisted the Boers and routed them, and, moreover, set a most salutary example of loyalty to the surrounding districts of Cape Colony. The following extracts from five short letters (all dated November 24), written by Mr. and Mrs. Hilliard to relatives, will be of interest, as showing the gallant spirit that sustained these brave people, and the love for Queen and country that was so practically displayed by them. Mr. Hilliard said :—" Just a short letter to say we have been fighting the Boers here from the 13th to the 18th, and have driven them back with heavy loss. I received a letter from their 'Fighting General,' Visser, on Sunday the 12th, saying that if I did not surrender the town voluntarily, he would take it by main force. I replied that if he did he would have to

The Transvaal War

take the consequences of his illegal act, as my Government had not instructed me to evacuate the town. The enemy has drawn off towards Vryburg." In another letter he said:—"We are going strong; the brave little garrison is so good and cheerful. The army has gone, but may return, so we are prepared." In yet another he wrote:—"We are all right up to now, and shall stick to our dear old flag till the last, whatever happens. May God defend the right and our dear Queen. Three cheers for all." Mrs. Hilliard wrote:—"On Monday, November 13, the Boers attacked Kuruman. Our men fought bravely for six days, after which the Boers departed, and we don't know if they intend returning or not. Charlie is at the Police Camp, and looks well and happy. He is very proud of our men. Our men are still on the alert, and are strengthening their forts, as the Boers will not return without a cannon. They quite expected this place to be handed over to them at once, as Vryburg was."

This state of affairs continued till the end of the year. On the 1st of January the plucky little garrison was at last forced to surrender. This, they said, they would never have done had they possessed a single cannon. The Boer artillery knocked to pieces the improvised fort before the white flag was hoisted over the ruins. Four men were killed and eighteen wounded in the splendid but hopeless effort to hold the open village against a foe provided with artillery and superior in numbers. The Boers numbered twelve hundred against some seventy-five practically helpless men! So the unequal tug-of-war came to an end—we may say, an honourable end.

In Northern Rhodesia, British subjects were practically isolated. The telegraph to the south was cut, and the railway—some four hundred miles of it—was damaged in various places. To show the state of remoteness in which the unfortunate inhabitants found themselves, it is sufficient to say that a telegram from London to Bulawayo took sixteen days in transit. Letters from Port Elizabeth were received about three weeks after being posted. It may easily be imagined what dearth of news prevailed, and how even such news as it was, was falsified by rumour. But the excellent fellows kept heart, although they were, as one of them said, "absolutely ignored by the British Government, and had not a red coat in the country." He went on to say, "We have any quantity of men of grit, and about a thousand fellows have volunteered to fight out of a total population of men, women, and children of six thousand at most."

So little could reach us as to the doings of Colonel Plumer's splendid little force, that the following letter from Trooper Young, a barrister, who joined at the outbreak of the war, may be

Kuruman and Elsewhere

quoted. It supplies some early links in the chain of the brave history :—

“FORT TULI, SOUTH AFRICA, *November 9, 1899.*

“I’ve had a bit of an exciting time since I last wrote—almost too exciting at one time. Last time I wrote was when we were leaving Tuli for Rhodes Drift. We arrived there all right after much marching and counter-marching, mostly by night. The second night of it, for the small portion we had for sleep I struck a guard ; so by the third night I was in a wretched state from want of sleep. I was always dropping off to sleep on my horse and suddenly waking up. Moreover, I began to see all sorts of strange things. Brooks and trees were transformed into houses and gardens, and then I would come-to with a start and pinch myself and try to keep awake—a very unpleasant experience. When we reached Rhodes Drift, our squadron was quartered there alone, and we had a couple of brushes with the enemy to start with.

“I missed the first, in which we had much the best of it. We only had one man hit, and that only slightly, and in return we bowled over a couple of Dutchmen (others may have been wounded), stampered their horses, over a hundred in number (we surprised their grazing guard), killed or wounded twenty of the horses, and jumped seven. The next fight was warm for a bit. We had only half the squadron—about forty-five men—who were reconnoitring round the enemy’s fort dismounted. This was only three miles from our camp and in British territory. We had four men wounded, and did an equal amount of damage to them, if not more. We got off very cheap, for their fire was very hot, and very close too. The third fight came off on November 2, and that was a scorcher. On the night before it I was on guard. It was a beastly night, raining and blowing hard, so I got very little sleep when it was my turn off. In the day I was in charge of the grazing guard with three other men.

“About one o’clock I got orders to bring in the horses, which I did, and had just got all the horses tied up when the Dutch started firing on us. I’d just got into a nice position behind a good big rock when I was ordered to ride out to warn our outlying pickets. There were three of them, four men in each, about a mile or a mile and a half away. A risky job it was too. Two of us were sent. I asked the other man which he would go to. He chose the one I had wanted, so I had the worst job—two pickets to warn, and had to ride right through the line of fire. As I started, one of our officers shouted, ‘Don’t spare your horse ; ride like h—ll ;’ and I did too. Directly I got out, ping-ping came two bullets, a bit high, but others soon followed much closer. I got out, though, all right, warned the two pickets, and came in with them. We got a bit of a fusillade on us when we got near the fort, but had no

The Transvaal War

casualties. The man who rode to the other picket had his horse shot under him ; so I scored—not for long, though, for my own horse was shot soon after.

“ When I got back, I found we were having a very hot time. Our position was a couple of small kopjes close together. On two sides there was an open space for about 600 or 700 yards. On the other two sides there was a lot of bush and a ridge running round us, which we were not strong enough to occupy. The Boers had in the field between 300 and 400 men, so we thought ; we afterwards found that that was not overstating their number. Moreover, they had 250 men and one gun at Brice's Store, about six miles away on the Tuli road, and strong reinforcements at their camp. They gave us the devil of a time. At first they fired mostly at the horses. They, poor beasts, had no cover, and nearly every one was hit. A few broke loose and bolted. Later, they turned their attention to us. Luckily, their shell-fire was very wild, or we should have suffered heavily. As it was, we had not a man even wounded ; but it was a miracle we did not, for at times their rifle-fire was very heavy, and now and then they got a good shell in. I had a narrow shave. A shell burst just near me, and one of the splinters struck a stone and sent a piece of it bang against my leg. It cut right through my putties, three folds of them. I made certain I was wounded, and was much relieved to find there was no damage done.

“ When the evening came, we had two alternatives—to stay where we were and wait to be cut up, or try to go through to Tuli. It was finally decided to do the latter, and it was undoubtedly the right thing to do. If we had remained, we should have been surrounded the next day, and every one slaughtered. With ninety men against a thousand we should have had no show ; still, it was a very bitter pill having to sneak off at night, leaving everything behind (including the few horses left alive), our kit and waggons, even the ambulance waggon. It was horrible saying good-bye to our horses. My poor little Whiskey was wounded and very unhappy ; we were not allowed to shoot the wounded ones, as we had to sneak off as quietly as possible. It was very sad work. Luckily we had no man hit. I don't know what we should have done if we had. I suppose we should have remained there and taken the inevitable consequences, as we would not have left them. We left at 8 P.M., and arrived at Tuli at 1 P.M. next day, only two halts, one and a half in the night for sleep, and another of half-an-hour for breakfast, which for me and most of us consisted of water. I had nothing to eat except one small cookie from 8 A.M. the morning of the fight to 2 P.M. the next day.

“ Altogether, we marched forty miles through awful country, for a long way through brushwood called the ‘ wait-a-bit ’ thorn, and in

Kuruman and Elsewhere

the night, too ; it tore our clothes, hands, arms, and faces to bits ; then through sand, over kopjes covered with thick brush. Altogether it was equal to sixty miles of English roads, and we went pretty fast when the way allowed. We had one pleasant surprise ; one of our officers left us and rode on to Tuli when we were about ten miles off, and reported that we were only a few miles out, pretty dead-beat, as we were. Until Captain Glynne arrived, they believed we were all cut up, and one of the squadrons rode out to us and lent us their horses, for which we were very grateful. They met us about three miles out, and I'm blowed if I know how we could have crawled in without them ; we were absolutely dead-beat. I was never so glad of a ride in my life. When we got into camp, we found that three or four of the men of E squadron, who had been left behind at Tuli sick, or had come in riding with dispatches, had prepared food for us, which was also very grateful, for we wanted it. We had left most of our kit behind at Tuli, so we were able to have a change of clothes and a wash, both very much needed, and then I must say I did enjoy myself. It was simply delightful to lie down and loaf about and do nothing but smoke cigarettes. All the bitterness of the defeat and the loss of our horses seemed to disappear, and I thoroughly enjoyed myself that afternoon.

“At Tuli every one believed we were cut up. A party from there, twenty-five in number, when escorting some waggons to us, were attacked by a much superior force at Brice's Store and badly defeated. They had to take to the bush and abandon the waggons. They brought four men wounded back, while seven were missing, including the parson, who was coming to see us—he was wounded in the leg. According to the men who were there, he was taking a distinctly active part in the fight. A squadron of some of the police, about 120 in all, were sent out to try and relieve us, but near the store were met by some of the boys who had bolted from us, and who reported that we were already wiped out, every man killed ; so they returned without trying to force their way through to us. In Tuli they were much relieved to hear of our safe arrival. It was certainly a very narrow squeak for us ; it is still a wonder to me how we managed to escape without losing a man. Certainly we had very good cover, and took advantage of it ; it was the only thing we could do. We managed to silence their rifle-fire once or twice, but could do nothing against their long-range shell-fire. Since then we have had very little to do, but expect to have some more fighting before long, when we hope to get a bit of our own back. One thing I think I may say without boasting—we all behaved very well. There was not a sign of funk, and every one took it coolly. As a matter of fact, more than half of E squadron had been under fire before, either in Rhodesia or elsewhere.”

The Transvaal War

To understand the effect of war upon Rhodesia at this time, we must read the following extracts from a letter written by a "Son of the Manse" in business near Buluwayo, dated 11th November 1899:— "We have been cut off from the south for more than five weeks, and are very badly off for news. Such news as we get comes by Beira, and as there is no cable between Delagoa Bay and Beira, this makes things worse. We have heard nothing from Mafeking since its investment by the Boers except a couple of messages sent out by a native runner to the nearest telegraph office still in touch with Buluwayo. A number of men from here are on the southern frontier keeping the Boers in check, so as to prevent them making a raid in this direction. They have had several skirmishes, but the Boers are not in any great force, as they appear to have concentrated their men on the Natal border, where most of the fighting will probably take place. Business is so slow here that numbers can get leave from their offices for the asking, and there were lots of fellows in town doing nothing who were only too glad of the chance of earning 10s. a day, which the Government are paying the Volunteers. The local newspaper here is of little use at present, as it has not funds to get direct news from Natal, and the only reliable information we get is published by the authorities. The *Chronicle* here came out with a special edition yesterday, describing a serious reverse to the British (two thousand men and forty-six officers captured), but it turned out to be taken from a German paper published in Zanzibar and sent to Beira, and I trust it may prove false. We won't get any newspapers, I fear, as long as the mails come *via* Beira, owing to the cost of bringing them from Salisbury by coach, but we hope there will be a change for the better soon. When the newspapers come they will be interesting reading. . . . The stoppage of the railway has had a serious effect in Buluwayo, as it has caused a tremendous rise in the prices of everything, and if most of the merchants had not laid in immense stocks in anticipation of what was coming, things would be very much worse. Some articles are very scarce. Potatoes are about £5 a sack, and of very inferior quality. Sugar is 9d. to 1s. per lb.; and a 200-lb. sack of flour costs 50s. to 60s., cheaper than most things, as there was an enormous stock stored. Everything is likely to go up still higher before supplies can reach the town, and fresh meal will soon be practically unattainable, and every one will have to depend on tinned meat. There are no colonial eggs coming up, so we are getting about 5s. a dozen for ours, and the price will probably rise, as with everything else. Some of the restaurants and hotels have had to close their dining-room, as so many men have gone to the front. The demand for eggs and fuel (wood) is, therefore, somewhat decreased. Several storekeepers talk of getting things from

Mafeking

Salisbury, and if prices rise very much perhaps it would pay. The average rate per waggon to Salisbury lately was nearly 25s. per 100 lbs. weight. The mines are still working fairly, and may be kept on. The Kaffirs round here seem to take little interest in the war, and the most of them have not the remotest idea where Natal is, although the Matabele came from there less than seventy years ago. Of course they all know the Boers, and thoroughly detest them, as they have very good reason to do. We have only had a few showers of rain here so far, and the grass is very poor. We can work our donkeys much at present on that account, as I want to have them in good order, as transport will be very high when communications are again established."

In Southern Rhodesia the Boers were kept in check by the activities of Colonel Holdsworth. In order to reconnoitre, and, if possible, attack the Boer laager at Sekwani, he started on the 23rd of November with seventy-five mounted men and ten cyclists on a night march over sandy roads in a region where water was extremely scarce. At daybreak they reached the Dutch laager and caught the Boers napping. Lieutenant Llewellyn wished them an energetic "Good morning" by means of a Maxim gun at 1000 to 1200 yards range, with the result that the enemy, about eighty strong, were routed from their position among the kopjes. The Boers retired to other kopjes, and from thence offered resistance, but as storming them would have entailed considerable loss, the British force returned to camp. They, however, burned a large store of ammunition and captured some rifles. Therefore their hundred-mile march, accomplished in twenty-three hours, was not profitless.

MAFEKING, NOVEMBER

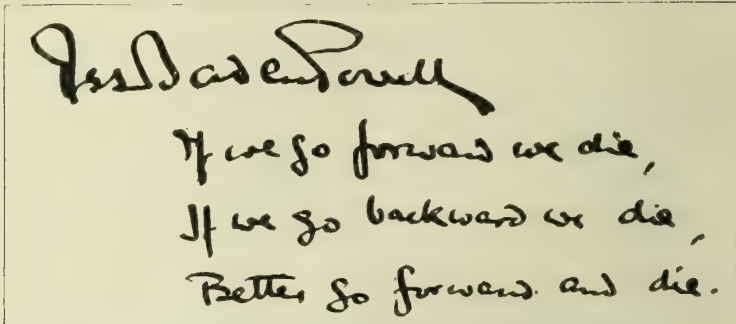
Poor Mafeking! The inevitable hung like a ghost over everything—bodiless, formless, but always there at the elbows of the gallant band that so long had held out against the foe. He was now coming closer—closer, continuing to sap and approach by parallels, till before long not only shells but rifle-fire would render streets impassable, shelters useless, and fortified positions dangerous. Colonel Baden-Powell's brilliant wits were hard pressed to keep the enemy from carrying the town by storm, and all who valued their lives lived underground, burrowing like rabbits, or in bombproof shelters, from which occasionally they were routed, not by fire but by water.

Still the word surrender was unspelt. None dared breathe it aloud. A battery of seven field-guns blazing their hot fire and doing their fell work made no effect—the besieged remained firm. Mauser bullets whizzed past their ears; shells long as coal-scuttles and nearly as thick crashed into buildings, now into the hospital, now the

The Transvaal War

convent, or sometimes into the women's laager, leaving not seldom a track of mourning and blood; but the Boer could not plume himself on victory. Not so far off his white tents reflected the sunlight, and closer still the grim music of his rifles was eternally to be heard; but inside the little town were men who were developing from mere men of commerce into toughened warriors, and assisting Colonel Baden-Powell and his diminutive force to maintain the majesty of Great Britain, with a chivalry that might have done honour to the knights of old.

Towards the middle of the month the garrison was much cheered by the arrival on the scene of a plucky American journalist, who had ridden from the Cape straight through the Boer lines, and who came with all the buoyancy of the outer world to delight the ears of the British with tales of Lord Methuen's advance. Other news now and then filtered in, and this the Colonel, either *viva voce* or



FACSIMILE OF WRITING IN ALBUM BY COL. BADEN-POWELL

by means of his typewriter, promptly shared with the whole interested community.

To make it evident that Mafeking was determined to keep lively and aggressive in spite of intermittent bombardment, several more gallant sorties were made, and on each occasion the little place came off with flying colours. Commander Cronje, disgusted, finally took himself off with some twenty waggons to Riceters (Transvaal), leaving his guns with the remaining commandoes and relegating to them the task of reducing the truculent town to submission.

Ruses, which are as the breath of his nostrils to the Boer in warfare, continued to be tried on Colonel Baden-Powell, who may be said to have almost enjoyed new chances to whet his wits and showed himself the last person to be caught napping. Indeed, some one at the time remarked that if they wanted to take him in they would have to get up very early in the morning and stay awake all night into the bargain! The latest Boer device was to make a show of going away and leaving a big gun apparently in a state of being



MAJOR-GENERAL LORD KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM.

Photo by Basano, London.

Mafeking

dismantled. This of course was what in vulgar phrase might be called a "draw" for the besieged. But the Colonel was not to be drawn; his smart scouts continually found the enemy hidden in force, and thereupon put every one on their guard. Mafeking, in fact, "sat tight" and—winked!

Meanwhile the inhabitants were pushing out advanced works with good effect, and began to feel more and more confident that their pluck and patience would ultimately receive their reward. Their bomb-proof shelters were becoming works of art. They were no longer rabbit-warrens, but well-ventilated apartments, roofed with the best steel rails and sand-bags, and lighted by windows resembling portholes. Great ingenuity was displayed in the wedding of safety with comfort, and the owners soon began to grow interested in the artistic quality of their improvised retreats!

On the 25th of November another gallant sortie was made, and the Chartered Company's Police, with magnificent pluck and determination, attacked Eloffsfort and kept the Boers from further encroachment.

For some days nothing unusual took place. The Boers continued to annoy with their 10-ton gun and the Boer flag began to float over the fortified places surrounding the town. In fact, there was a somewhat wearisome monotony in the programme of daily life. The laconic report at that time of one of the sufferers was that the sole resource was to "snipe and wait!" Fortunately pressure elsewhere was beginning to draw off some of the hostile legions, and consequently the activity of the assault on the town was diminished. It was quite evident that Colonel Baden-Powell had been found a nasty nut to crack, and that his earthworks, his trenches, his underground shelters, his night attacks, and his hundred-and-one minor dodges, which had been craftily invented to test the amiability of the ingenuous Boer, were scarcely appreciated. Indeed, the worthy Cronje, when wisely taking himself off, was reported to have owned that the Mafeking blend of Baden-Powell-dynamite-mine-and-best-Sheffield was decidedly infernal!

On this subject the correspondent of the *Times*, who was cooped in Mafeking, said: "The significance of the dynamite mines which surround our position cannot be under-estimated. Had the Boers any trustworthy information as to the whereabouts of the mines, the town would probably have been stormed weeks ago. The general ignorance on their part of the locality of the mines creates corresponding dread. The mines may be taken as a material effort on the part of Rhodesia to assist Imperial prestige and interests. The Postmaster-General of Rhodesia lent Mr. Kiddy, manager of telegraphs, to superintend the laying of mines, telephones, and field-telegraphs. The services so rendered have been invaluable."

The Transvaal War

Of the Commandant another of the beleaguered band wrote: "Commanding us we have a man than whom we could have none better. The Colonel is always smiling, and is a host in himself. To see 'B. P.,' as he is affectionately termed, whistling down the street, deep in thought, pleasing of countenance, cheerful and confident, is cheering and heartening—far more cheering and heartening than a pint of dry champagne. Had any man in whom the town placed less confidence been in command, disaster might have befallen Mafeking; and if we are able to place the name of Mafeking upon the roll of the Empire's outposts which have fought for the honour and glory of Britain, it will be chiefly because Baden-Powell has commanded us."

That our good old friend *Punch* should, in his old age, cause almost intoxicating delight is a fact worthy of note. A copy brought by Reuter's cyclist-runner was safely carried into the town, to the intense joy of its inhabitants. It contained the cartoon by Sir John Tenniel in which John Bull is represented as telling the Boer that if he wishes to fight it must be a fight to the finish. The journal was read and re-read even to the advertisements, and gloated over for many days. What has now become of it is a question of interest. There are doubtless many collectors of war trophies who would pay more than his weight in gold for Mr. Punch after he had lived through and shared in the vicissitudes of siege life in Mafeking.

The pluck of Colonel Baden-Powell seemed to be epidemic. Young boys, and even women, clamoured to do their share of the work, and strove to display a perfectly unruffled front in face of shot and shell. In one house some ladies stuck to their abode while the breastworks were being built, and employed the interval in playing and singing the National Anthem, thus stimulating and cheering the workers outside, who joined heartily in the chorus. On the 28th of November grand preparations were made for an evening attack, and these were quietly inspected by Colonel Baden-Powell in the small hours of the morning. But the Boers, whose spies were for ever busy, were forewarned and had evacuated their position. From the advanced trench in the river-bed some successful sniping at the foe on the brickfields was carried on, however, and from here the enemy was eventually routed by the smart action of the besieged.

During the night the Colonel ordered Captain Fitzclarence, with D squadron and a Hotchkiss gun, to relieve Lord C. Bentinck and to support the "snipers" in the river-bed. D squadron took up a position in the river-bed under Captain Fitzclarence and Lieutenant Bridges 1400 yards from "Big Ben." The Cape Police and a Maxim at the extreme south-east corner, and Captain Marsh with

Mafeking

a detachment of the Cape Police in the native stadt at 2000 yards range, co-operated. It now became impossible for the Boer artillerists to hold the emplacement of their 100-lb. gun. Heavy three-cornered volleying from the British positions swept the parapet of "Big Ben" every time its detachment attempted to turn the gun upon the town. The remarkable accuracy of our fire kept the Boer gunners at bay, and after discharging two shells they withdrew the weapon below its platform. The enemy made some futile efforts to renew the shelling, but at last desisted. But on the morrow the customary salute of big guns was resumed. Meanwhile the Colonel employed himself with various jokes of a very practical nature, which served to keep the wits and energies of the Boers in a perpetual state of polish.

News from Colonel Plumer and his force was scarce, but all were aware that their days and nights were spent in hard work, great discomfort, and in perpetual and gallant efforts to come to the aid of the besieged town. It must be remembered that the Rhodesian Regiment originally had for its object the protection of the northern border of the Transvaal and a portion of the western side. Mafeking made, as it were, the outer gate, and this gate it was necessary to defend in order to preserve the communications with the north and with Buluwayo. No sooner, therefore, was it locked by a state of siege, than the entire responsibility of keeping the Boers at bay in the northern fringe of the Transvaal devolved on Colonel Plumer, who, on arrival at Tuli, set to work to guard the Drifts, and keep an eye on all quarters along the Crocodile where the Boers might try to effect a crossing. At Rhodes Drift, twenty-six miles south of South Tuli, he posted Major Pilsen with 250 mounted infantry, while Captain Maclaren, with fifty men of the Rhodesia Regiment and twenty of the Bechuanaland Border Police, was sent to garrison Macloutsie, some thirty miles north of the Limpopo, where it was said the Boers hoped to put in an appearance. Major Pilsen, as we know, was forced to retire on Tuli, after which the position vacated by him was occupied by Colonel Spreckley (Southern Rhodesia Volunteers), who in his turn was obliged to make a night march back to Tuli, with the loss of all his horses. Soon after this, strong Boer patrols approached daily towards Tuli, and the garrison had an anxious and energetic time. Minor skirmishes took place with certain success, but leaving behind them their melancholy roll of killed and wounded. Soon, however, a British victory south, and Colonel Plumer's exertions round about, combined to alter the Boer plans, and at length their retirement in the direction of Mafeking was reported. Whereupon this enterprising officer prepared to enter the Transvaal, whither he was driven, not by the enemy, but by drought. On the 1st of December

The Transvaal War

he started from Tuli with a force of mounted men, and, after hair-breadth escapes, in four or five days reached a place some fifty miles north of Petersburg, the chief town in the north of the South African Republic. He also proceeded down the railway line towards Mafeking, but was continually harassed by the enemy, and continually obliged to retrace his steps owing to lack of water and other insuperable difficulties. Here we must leave him for a time.

The Boers, learning that necessity is the mother of invention, and finding they could not get into Mafeking, were obliged to communicate with the Baden-Powell "braves" in an original manner. They fired into the town a five-pounder shell, which failed to explode. It was examined, opened, and discovered to contain the following jocose epistle:—"Dear Powell,—Excuse an iron messenger. There is no other means of communicating. Please tell Mrs.—Mother and family all well. Don't drink all the whisky. Leave some for us when we get in." This was a little piece of innocent diversion compared to other experiences. On the following day a shell from a Boer 100-pounder struck a store, sending its splinters far and wide, and carrying devastation in its wake. Daily some tragic episode was the result of a well-directed shot, some white or black inhabitant was left a mangled, hopeless wreck—a pathetic fortuitous atom blown to the winds by the blast of war. In addition to the intermittent uproar of the heavy guns, heaven's thunders at times broke out, with copious showers of rain, and one of these, on the 5th, was so violent that it flooded out the trenches, and made all bomb-proof shelters untenable. Trouble and discomfort were as far as possible relieved with great energy by Lord Edward Cecil and others, but the effects of the inundation were not easily removed. Brisk engagements between the sharpshooters on either side now formed part of a morning and evening programme, and the Protectorate Regiment, under Lord Charles Bentinck, did such good service that the enemy grew shy of approach, and concluded that the process of starving out the garrison would be more comfortable than shelling so vigorous and retaliative a community.

On the 10th of December the Dutchman Viljoen, who was a prisoner, was exchanged for Lady Sarah Wilson. The story of this enterprising lady is one of remarkable interest. In the beginning of the siege she left Mafeking and rode to Setlagoli Hotel, where she arrived on the same night. No sooner was she asleep than the rattle and roar of musketry commenced. This was afterwards discovered to be the gallant fight of Lieutenant Nesbitt on the armoured train, which has been described in the opening story of the siege. Poor Nesbitt, it may be remembered, was taken prisoner. Lady Sarah, a day or two after the fight, rode to the scene of the engagement and photographed the wreck. Later on, this intrepid lady moved from

Mafeking

Mosuti to the care of a colonial farmer, and with great difficulty and much expenditure of energy and coin, she managed to induce the natives to provide her with information. All this time she and her friends were subject to the insults of the Boers. At one period she was declared to be the sole survivor of Mafeking, in hiding in the disguise of a woman. At another, she was believed to be the wife of one of the British generals. Others declared that the extraordinary lady was a member of the Royal Family, who was acting as spy on the doings of the Boers in the Colony. After moving to Vryburg, life for her became more exciting still. A young Boer passed her off as his sister, and some loyalists in the town gave her shelter, and helped her to obtain official despatches and news. But her state was far from comfortable, for most of her excursions had to be made under the shadow of night, and her days were spent enclosed in a room at the hotel. When Lady Sarah desired to leave the town, her exit was not so easy. The magistrates had issued orders that no one was to leave, and but for the kindness of her "brother Boer," she might not have been able to depart. Their journey was commenced at four in the morning, while it was still dark, and before leaving the town they had to submit to a search of their car, lest it should contain any contraband of war.

At last, however, it was discovered that Lady Sarah Wilson's energy was connected with despatch-running, and her liberty was threatened. One day while riding to Mafeking with her maid she was captured by the Boers. On reaching Snyman's camp, the general refused to allow her to proceed to her destination or to return to Setlagoli. She was then detained as a prisoner of war, pending negotiations with Colonel Baden-Powell regarding the terms of her release. The Colonel offered to exchange for Lady Sarah a Boer lady prisoner, but the enemy refused to part with their prize till Viljoen, who was incarcerated in Mafeking, was first given up. Colonel Baden-Powell then represented that he, as a natural consequence, and without terms of exchange, had at once transferred women and children prisoners to the care of their people; but the Boer general was not to be prevailed upon by argument. Eventually Viljoen was given up and Lady Sarah returned safe and well to Mafeking. The transaction, though somewhat unpleasant, was on the whole decidedly complimentary to Lady Sarah in particular, and to the British feminine sex in general. It fully proved that an Englishwoman might in future view herself as the equivalent of a Boer officer.

The artillery-fire of the enemy was now beginning to prove more efficient than formerly. In spite of this, however, Colonel Baden-Powell, in the kindness of his heart, issued a warning to the Burghers advising them to make terms and go home. This

The Transvaal War

very characteristic epistle is here reproduced, as it shows the amazing blend of serpent and dove in the spirit of the man who was at that moment facing the choice of death or surrender :—

“To the Burghers under arms round Mafeking :—

“Burghers,—I address you in this manner because I have only recently learned how you have been intentionally kept in the dark by your officers, the Government, and the newspapers as to what is happening in other parts of South Africa. As the officer commanding Her Majesty's troops on this border, I think it right to point out clearly the inevitable result of your remaining longer under arms against Great Britain. You are aware that the present war was caused by the invasion of British territory by your forces without justifiable reasons. Your leaders do not tell you that so far your forces have only met the advanced guard of the British forces. The circumstances have changed within the last week. The main body of the British are now daily arriving by thousands from England, Canada, India, and Australia, and are about to advance through the country. In a short time the Republic will be in the hands of the English, and no sacrifice of life on your part can stop it. The question now that you have to put to yourselves before it is too late is :—Is it worth while losing your lives in a vain attempt to stop the invasion or take a town beyond your borders, which, if taken, will be of no use to you?

“I may tell you that Mafeking cannot be taken by sitting down and looking at it, for we have ample supplies for several months. The Staats artillery has done very little damage, and we are now protected both by troops and mines. Your presence here and elsewhere under arms cannot stop the British advancing through your country. Your leaders and newspapers are also trying to make you believe that some foreign combination or Power is likely to intervene in your behalf against England. It is not in keeping with their pretence that your side is going to be victorious, nor in accordance with facts. The Republics having declared war and taken the offensive, cannot claim intervention on their behalf. The German Emperor is at present in England, and fully sympathises with us. The American Government has warned others of its intention to side with England should any Power intervene. France has large interests in the goldfields, identical with those of England. Italy is entirely in accord with us. Russia has no cause to interfere. The war is of one Government against another, and not of a people against another people. The duty assigned to my troops is to sit still here until the proper time arrives, and then to fight and kill until you give in. You, on the other hand, have other interests to think of, your families, farms, and their safety. Your leaders have caused the destruction of farms, and have fired on women and children. Our men are becoming hard to restrain in consequence. They have also caused the invasion of Kaffir territory, looting their cattle, and have thus induced them to rise and invade your country and kill your Burghers. As one white man to another, I warned General Cronje on November 14 that this would occur. Yesterday I heard that more Kaffirs were rising. I have warned General Snyman accordingly. Great bloodshed and destruction of farms threaten you on all sides.

“I wish to offer you a chance of avoiding it. My advice to you is to return to your homes without delay and remain peaceful till the war is over. Those who do this before the 13th will, as far as possible, be protected, as regards yourselves, your families, and property, from confiscation, looting,

Kimberley

and other penalties, to which those remaining under arms will be subjected when the invasion takes place. Secret agents will communicate to me the names of those who do. Those who do not avail themselves of the terms now offered may be sure that their property will be confiscated when the troops arrive. Each man must be prepared to hand over a rifle and 150 rounds of ammunition. The above terms do not apply to officers and members of the Staats artillery, who may surrender as prisoners of war at any time, nor to rebels on British territory.

"It is probable that my force will shortly take the offensive. To those who after this warning defer their submission till too late, I can offer no promise. They will have only themselves to blame for injury to and loss of property they and their families may afterwards suffer."—(Signed) R. S. S. BADEN-POWELL, Colonel, Mafeking, December 10."

If this warning did nothing else, it certainly had the effect of touching General Snyman in a soft spot, for he at once wrote to his Burghers in fiery language, expressing his disapproval that such a communication should have been addressed direct to them. The idea that "sitting and looking at a place is not the way to take it" seems to have gone home to him, for he promptly challenged the besieged to come out and drive him away!

On the same day as his address to the Burghers the Colonel wrote home to a relative in England, and sent the missive folded in a quill, which was in its turn rammed into the pipe of a Kaffir:—

"MAFEKING, Dec. 12, 1899.

"All going well with me. To-day I have been trying to find any old Carthusians in the place to have a Carthusian dinner together, as it is Founder's Day; but so far, for a wonder, I believe I am the only one among the odd thousand people here.

"This is our sixtieth day of the siege, and I do believe we're beginning to get a little tired of it; but I suppose, like other things, it will come to an end some day. I have got such an interesting collection of mementoes of it to bring home. I wonder if Baden¹ is in the country? What fun if he should come up to relieve me!

"I don't know if this letter will get through the Boer outposts, but if it does, I hope it will find you very well and flourishing."

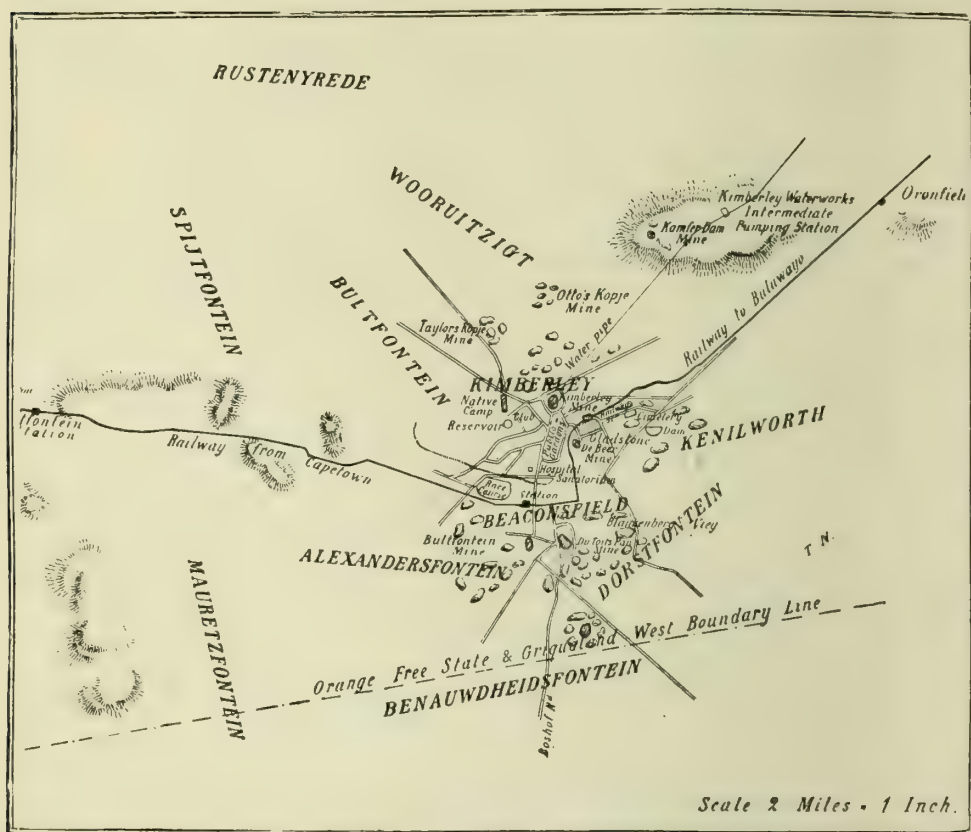
KIMBERLEY

At Kimberley on November 4 things were still cheerful, though short commons had begun to be enforced. The Transvaalers advanced on Kenilworth, and Major Peakman with a squadron of the Kimberley Light Horse, emerging suddenly from the bush, gave them a warm reception. Colonel Scott-Turner reinforced Major Peakman, and two guns were sent to support him against the enemy's guns, which at that juncture ceased firing. The

¹ Captain Baden-Powell, of the Scots Guards.

The Transvaal War

enemy's fire with one piece of artillery was on the whole poor, and fortunately little serious damage was done. Later in the afternoon came another encounter with the enemy, an encounter which was kept up till dusk, and in which the enemy sustained considerable loss. Unfortunately Major Ayliff of the Cape Police, a brave and efficient officer, was wounded in the neck. The Boers occupied the Kammersdam mine, some five miles distant, and shelled the Otto



PLAN OF KIMBERLEY AND ENVIRONS

Kopje mine, while the manager, Mr. Chapman, like a Spartan, watched the destruction of his property and kept Colonel Kekewich informed as to the damage done. This was luckily small. On November 6 General Cronje sent a message to Colonel Kekewich calling on him to surrender, otherwise the town would be bombarded, and on the following day a force of Free State artillery, supported by a large commando, began further offensive operations. Captain Brown, who rode out a short distance to Alexandersfontein, was captured, and stripped by the Boers because he would reveal nothing regarding the state of the town.

Kimberley

According to rough calculation, the opposing forces at Kimberley early in November stood thus :—

Four companies of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment ;
battery of Royal Garrison Artillery, consisting of six
7-pounder mountain guns ; a large party of Royal
Engineers ; detachment of the Army Medical Corps . 2500

In addition to these were the following irregular troops :—

One battery Diamond Fields Artillery with six 7-pounder
field guns, 3 officers and 90 non-commissioned officers
and men ; Diamond Fields Horse, 6 officers and 142 non-
commissioned officers and men ; Kimberley Regiment, 14
officers and 285 non-commissioned officers and men . 540

Free Staters, and probably some Transvaal Boers, with four
field-guns, 3500 ; on Orange River, 2000 ; reinforce-
ments from Mafeking, 1000 6500

The disparity was not enlivening, but, though provisions were beginning to run low, pluck was inexhaustible. And with pluck, as with faith, one may move mountains.

On the 11th of November the bombardment of the town was commenced with great vigour, the Boers firing from three positions. Little serious damage was done, owing to the fact that many of the shells did not burst. In spite of the incessant brawling of artillery, the perpetual appearance of fog, and a stinging pall of smoke in which they lived, the inhabitants of the place kept up an air of cheery unconcern, which naturally they were far from feeling. They also determined to disquiet the enemy by continual threats of attack from unexpected quarters. With the spirit of philosophers they at times made small diversions for themselves. Once when a cooking-pot was struck the debris were put up to auction, and some fun was got out of the brisk competition for the historic relics. Some of the choicest of these were knocked down—this time not by guns—for the sum of £2 a piece. The price of a complete shell was about £5, and portions of one could be purchased at proportionate rates. Bits and fragments fetched sums varying from half a crown to half a sovereign !

Nothing further happened, save that a cabdriver was captured, interrogated, threatened, and finally set free. Commandant Wessels, who sounded him regarding the dynamite mines round Kimberley, concluded with the message—a typical specimen of Boer braggadocio—“Tell Rhodes I shall take Wesselton mine next Tuesday, and then he must stand whiskies !”

On the 12th Lord Methuen, on whom all had pinned their faith, arrived with his staff at the Orange River. This was a red-letter day. The news of British relief so close at hand was most inspiring, and

The Transvaal War

those whose patience was inclined to languish began to take heart. In Kimberley itself the weather was fine and warm, and as yet little ill consequence from the shelling was suffered. A peacock was killed, some buildings damaged, some nervous persons terrified. The military authorities issued a proclamation ordering that all people not engaged with the defensive forces should give up arms and ammunition, a decision that was found necessary to prevent irresponsible persons from infringing the laws of civilised warfare.

On the 17th of November a force composed of detachments of the Diamond Fields Horse, Kimberley Light Horse, and Cape Police, under Colonel Scott Turner, went out with a field-gun and two Maxims to ascertain the strength of the enemy's position at Lazaretto Ridge. The enemy, who were posted on a rocky mound between Carter's Farm and the reservoir, opened fire on the advancing men, who, though some vigorous volleys were returned, were obliged to retire. Meanwhile the Beaconsfield Town Guard had a tussle with the foe, and, after much firing on either side, he eventually retired. As usual, he hid behind rocks and stones, and made himself generally inaccessible. On the following day some smart engagements ensued, and so brisk was the volleying from rifles and the booming of field-guns, that the townspeople believed that some decisive battle must be taking place. There were, however, few casualties.

All eyes were now fixed on the doings of the Kimberley relief force that was concentrating at Orange River. A few more weeks, nay, a few more days, and those patient, cheery prisoners would march out free to have their reckoning with the Boers. Lord Methuen, once joined by the Coldstream Guards, Grenadiers, and Naval Brigade, would be able to push on, and then the first big move in the war would be made. So they hoped, and with reason, for an electric searchlight, worked by the Naval Brigade under Colonel Ernest Rhodes, was signalling to Kimberley, whose searchlights were plainly visible to the advancing army.

To the dreary imprisoned inhabitants this mode of communication was vastly exciting. Every day the relief column was approaching nearer and nearer, and the patient though longing besieged began to feel as if they were already almost liberated. They commenced preparing an enthusiastic welcome for the incoming troops, and ironical farewell salutations were now levied at the Boers in acknowledgment of shells and of their general artillery prowess. At that time, coming events—the disasters of Majesfontein and Colenso—had not cast their shadows before! Mr. Rhodes was particularly cheery, and took most whimsically to the information conveyed through Kaffir sources that the enemy was keenly desirous of exhibiting him in a cage at Bloemfontein prior to despatching him to Pretoria! The brutal manners and

Kimberley

customs of the Boers, however, were no subject for joke, as shown by their treatment of four "boys" who were found and captured while searching for stray cattle. After killing a couple of them, the enemy ordered the remaining two, having first flogged them, to bury the bodies of their comrades, and then go back to Kimberley and tell their friends how they had been treated.

Boer tricks continued to be practised with little success. They served instead to sharpen the wits of the beleaguered Kimburlians—if one may be allowed to coin a word which seems to suit them. A



THE SIEGE OF KIMBERLEY: TYPICAL SPLINTER-PROOF SHELTER OF SAND-BAGS
AND IRON PLATES

Photo, Hancox, Kimberley

few rifle-shots were fired in the direction of Wright's Farm for the purpose of pretending that the long-looked-for relieving force was approaching, and thus draw out the Diamond Fields Horse; but the manœuvre was a failure. The Boers consoled themselves by blowing up two large culverts near the rifle-butts on the line towards Spyfontein, where the bulk of the Boer forces were then supposed to be. An official estimate at that date (Nov. 25) placed the number of shells fired by the Boers during the bombardment at 1000, while the number of shells fired by the British was 600. Owing to the

The Transvaal War

fact that the hostile shells had so often fallen in sandy ground, their effect had been neutralised. Experiments were made with "home-made" shells, or rather De Beers-made shells, which exploded to the general satisfaction of their manufacturers. Some of these were said to be labelled "With J. C. Rhodes's compliments," but this was doubtless a cheery quip for the entertainment of the lugubrious, as Colonel Kekewich and the "Colossus" were too good men of business to waste their ammunition on pleasantries. These two marvellous people were now working hand in hand, the great business brain of the one lending support to the military skill of the other. Mr. Rhodes placed at the disposal of the Colonel—one should say of his country—the whole resources of De Beers, and worked without cessation for the welfare of the people, spending without stint, intellect, energy, and funds on their behalf. When the mines ceased to work, he still paid full wages to the 2000 white men employed on them, and laid out large vegetable gardens in the midst of Kenilworth for the purpose of supplying the inhabitants with green foods. He organised a mounted force of 600 men, supplying them himself with horses; and later on he instituted a service of native runners and scouts, which served to keep the garrison alert as to the whereabouts of the enemy. Indeed, space does not allow of a faithful recital of the doings of this public benefactor, who, without display, made his influence felt in every quarter of the town.

Kimberley, as said, was now in communication by searchlight with Colonel Rhodes, and was racking its brains how an attempt might be made from the east side to march out and assist the troops coming from Belmont. "So near and yet so far" was the general feeling in regard to these troops, and a burning desire for the hand-clasp of the gallant rescuers filled all the brave yet anxious hearts that for so long had been cut off from the outer world.

On the 25th of November there was unusual activity. The mounted troops at dawn made a strong reconnaissance in force under Lieut.-Colonel Scott Turner. The guns were under the charge of Colonel Chamier of the Royal Artillery. Hostilities commenced with a hot fire from the Diamond Fields Artillery's guns under Captain May, in the direction of Carter's Farm, Colonel Scott Turner with his troops marching towards Lazaretto Ridge, where the enemy was strongly entrenched. This took place at about 4.30 A.M. in the dusk of the early dawn. By good chance the pickets were found to be asleep, and Colonel Scott Turner and his forces crept along the ridge and with marvellous energy rushed the Boer redoubts. On the instant rifles bristled—shots blazed out. But all was to no purpose; the Boers had to surrender. They did this in their usual treacherous fashion, hoisting the white flag while they took stray pot-shots at their conquerors. This charge was one worthy of record, for few

Kimberley

of the men who engaged in it had ever used a bayonet in their lives. So little did they know of the weapon, that they were unable to fix it in the socket, and consequently rushed upon the enemy, rifle in one hand and naked blade in the other!

As ill-luck would have it, there was a lack of ammunition, and the British attack could not be pressed home. Meanwhile the Royal Engineers on Otto Kopje were protecting the flanks, and a strong body of infantry with a mounted force, field-guns and Maxims, were checking the advance of the enemy from Spyfontein. An armoured train, also, under Lieutenant Webster (North Lancashire Regiment), was reconnoitring north and south. The train (which was supported by three half companies of the Beaconsfield Town Guard under Major Fraser) proceeded south of Kimberley, and held the enemy's reinforcements in check as they advanced from Wimbledon. Subsequently, owing to the brisk firing of the Boer guns, it was decided to return to Kimberley, where Colonel Scott Turner, in consequence of his inability to hold the position he had stormed, was forced also to retire. But during the hot cannonade in which our artillery was engaged with that of the enemy in all directions save Kenilworth, this gallant officer was wounded. First his horse was shot under him, then a bullet pierced the muscle of his shoulder. But he continued to perform his duties regardless of the inconvenience caused by his wound. The Boers, as usual, paid no respect to the ambulance waggon, despite the obvious Red Cross flag which fluttered over it. They fired at it when they chose, and, as some reported, used explosive bullets. Eight prisoners were captured, in addition to two wounded Boers.

The day's work on the whole was satisfactory, as it ably demonstrated that there was life in the garrison yet. And this glorious activity was subsequently recognised in the following order:—

"The officer commanding desires to thank all ranks who took part in to-day's engagement for their excellent behaviour. The garrison of Kimberley have this day shown that they can not only defend their positions, but can sally out and drive the enemy from their entrenched positions. He deplors the loss of the brave comrades who have so honourably fallen in the performance of their duty."

A second sortie of the same kind was attempted on the 28th of November, but with more disastrous results. The troops took the same direction as before—attacked the Boers, beat them back, and captured their laager and three works. But, on attempting to take the fourth work, the enemy fought desperately, and Lieut.-Colonel Scott Turner was killed. When Colonel Scott Turner fell, Lieutenant Clifford, North Lancashire Regiment, who had more than once distinguished himself, assumed command of the Imperial

The Transvaal War

Mounted Infantry, and, though wounded in the scalp, pluckily remained on duty till all was over.¹

There was terrible grief in the garrison at the loss of this splendid officer, the principal organiser of the Town Guards and the successful leader of so many skirmishes and sorties throughout the siege. The following special order was issued :—

“The officer commanding has again to congratulate the troops of the garrison who engaged the enemy yesterday on their excellent behaviour and on the capture of the enemy's laager, with his supplies, ammunition, &c. It was in every respect a most creditable performance. He has also again to deplore the loss of many brave men who have fallen at the call of duty. It was with profound sorrow he learnt that Lieut.-Colonel Scott Turner was killed while gallantly leading his men against the last stronghold of the enemy's defences. In Lieut.-Colonel Scott Turner the garrison of Kimberley loses a brave and most distinguished comrade, and the officer commanding feels sure the whole population of Kimberley will join with them in mourning the loss of this true British officer, to whose skill and activity in the field is so largely due the complete success of our efforts to keep the enemy at a safe distance from this town.”

Major M. C. Peakman, an excellent and most dauntless officer, succeeded to the command of the Kimberley Light Horse in consequence of Colonel Scott Turner's death.

Lieutenant Wright of the Kimberley Light Horse was killed, and among the wounded were Lieutenant W. K. Clifford (1st Battalion Loyal North Lancashire Regiment), Captain Walleck (Diamond Fields Horse), and Lieutenant Watson (Kimberley Light Horse).

On the afternoon of the 29th of November, amid feelings of universal regret, the remains of Colonel Scott Turner and others who fell in Tuesday's sortie were interred. The ceremony, so common in those days, was yet full of deep pathos. Round the graves stood Mr. Cecil Rhodes, Dr. Smart, the Mayor of Kimberley, Mr. and the Hon. Mrs. Rochfort Maguire, and indeed the whole mournful community of the place. Six volleys were fired over the graves, six blasts blown on the bugle, and then a last prayer being said, they left them “alone in their glory.”

¹ Henry Scott Turner entered the Black Watch at the age of twenty in 1887. After taking part in the operations in Matabeleland in 1893-94, he was, in the latter year, placed on the “Special Extra Regimental Employment List,” and in 1896 served with the Matabeleland Relief Force as adjutant and paymaster. For this service he was mentioned in despatches and received a brevet majority. After serving with the British South African Police, Major Scott Turner was, last July, reappointed as a “Special Service Officer,” and in that capacity had done excellent service in Kimberley under Colonel Kekewich.

CHAPTER III

LIFE WITH GENERAL GATACRE

ON the 18th of December, General Gatacre withdrew from Putter's Kraal, his original advance post, to Sterkstroom. At this time, in the central sphere, Generals French and Gatacre, while guarding the lines of communication, were merely waiting the turn of events. Owing to a series of successful skirmishes, in which a patrol under Captain de Montmorency, V.C., was engaged, the Boers thought discretion the better part of valour, and cleared out of Dordrecht, with the result that on the 24th of December Colonel Dalgety, of the Cape Mounted Rifles, with his force occupied the town. At Bushman's Hoek were four companies of the Royal Scots, two 12-pounders, three Maxim guns, about 800 Kaffrarian Rifles, and about thirty Engineers. Owing to scarcity of water General Gatacre's force had to be divided, the rest remaining at Sterkstroom. There water had to be conveyed by rail, whence, with some difficulty, it was hauled to Bushman's Hoek in water-tanks by mules. The railway in these parts, a species of South African switchback on two narrow rails, rambled up hill and down dale with engaging ingenuity. Though water was dependent on the trains, fresh foods were sometimes obtainable. At neighbouring farms it was possible to purchase butter-milk, grain, and bread, but to "go a marketing" it was necessary to start in full marching order, for there was no knowing when the Boers might block the road, or what nefarious tricks might be taking place. It was quite impossible to be even with the Dutchmen's ruses. For instance, one who knew their ways said that if a Boer horse went lame or knocked up, twenty chances to one a "loyal" would place a mount at his disposal, give him bed, "tucker," forage, &c., while he would also watch the horizon for the approach of the military, and should they come the Boer would be a man of peace, without uniform, arms, or anything else to incriminate him. Therefore, as may be imagined, life was never too easy-going. The day began at 3.15 A.M., but night itself, short as it was, was scarcely restful. The troops slept with their straps on, 150 rounds of ammunition apiece by their side, in hourly expectation of attack. Niceties of the toilet were unknown, and gallant fellows with black faces and whiskers whose acquaintance with water was only weekly, were the rule.

The Transvaal War

Some even presented the appearance of opera-house brigands, having locks so redundant and long, that jocose Tommies suggested writing home to their sweethearts for the loan of hairpins.

In other respects the daily routine was not unpleasant. Bullocks and sheep were killed regularly and found their way into the camp-kettle; bread was still served out, and supplemented with biscuits. For recreation there was football; and to enliven the spirits there were four cheery pipers, who at night-time made the welkin ring, and caused their compatriots to start up and indulge in reels and Highland flings, and almost to forget that they were in the land of the enemy.

On the 29th, a pouring day, Captain de Montmorency started with his scouts and thirty Cape Mounted Rifles in hope of catching the enemy. But the Boers, under cover of the mist, took themselves off in the direction of the Barkly East district.

On the 30th of December a hundred of Flannigan's Squadron of Brabant's Horse had a smart brush with an equal number of Dutchmen, who, however, were promptly reinforced. Thereupon the squadron retired, but unfortunately Lieutenant Milford Turner and twenty-seven men were left behind in a donga which none would leave, determining to remain there and protect Lieutenant Warren of Brabant's Horse, who was wounded. To their assistance went Captain Goldsworthy the next day, accompanied by Captain de Montmorency's scouts, 110 men, and four guns. These arrived on the scene so early as to surprise the Boers, who, after having been kept at bay by the small force of Colonials, had continued to snipe at them from a distance throughout the night. A sharp fight now ensued, and, after some clever manœuvring on both sides, the enemy retired with the loss of eight killed, while the party in the donga was relieved, and returned in safety to Dordrecht. The rescue was highly exciting, as the Boers were finally sent helter-skelter just as our men, worn out with a night's anxiety in the nullah, had almost given up hope of release. As it was, they were restored to their friends in camp amid a storm of cheers.

Early on the 3rd of January a force was sent out from the advanced camp at Bushman's Hoek to meet a hostile horde that occupied Molteno. The Boers had mounted a big gun on a kopje in front of Bushman's Hoek, and from thence commenced to fire at about eight o'clock. Around the neighbourhood the Boers were seen to be swarming; therefore the force, composed of Kaffrarian Rifles, Mounted Infantry of the Berkshire Regiment, and the Cape Mounted Police, at once engaged them.

Two hours later General Gatacre and Staff started from headquarters with half a battalion of the Royal Scots and the 78th Battery of Artillery. The Boers from their point of vantage were



MAJOR-GENERAL SIR W. F. GATACRE, K.C.B.

Photo by Elliott & Fry, London.

Life with General Gatacre

firing from the hill on which was placed their big gun, and they continued to fire on the Infantry as they advanced over an undulating plain to right of Cypherghat, whence the population had fled panic-stricken at the outset of the fight. Fortunately the hostile shells burst without doing damage, and the troops continued to advance.

The Artillery made a detour to the right, secured a commanding position on a kopje, and from thence began a ten minutes' cannonade which had the effect of silencing the Boers. They withdrew their gun and retreated, the bulk of their force now advancing, now retiring, to cover the movement.

At this juncture the Mounted Infantry, which had worked its way round with a view to outflanking the enemy's position, came on the scene only to learn of the withdrawal. This was carried on without check owing to our lack of cavalry. While General Gatacre's force were thus engaged, the enemy was making a determined attack on 140 men of the Cape Police and 60 men of the Kaffrarian Rifles at Molteno. They were splendidly repulsed, though the Police had an unpleasant experience. Five shells dropped into their camp, but all miraculously escaped injury. The Boers now retired as mysteriously as they had come, and none knew the exact reason for their arrival. It was suspected that it was a "slim" trick to draw General Gatacre into another trap.

A strong force left Sterkstroom before dawn on the morning of the 8th of January for the dual purpose of reconnoitring in the direction of Stormberg and taking possession of the meal and flour from Molteno Mills. The force comprised the Derbyshire Regiment, the 77th and 79th Field Batteries, 400 mounted men of the Cape Police and Berkshire Regiment, the Kaffrarian Rifles, and the Frontier Rifles. The expedition was eminently successful. The operation of removing the food-stuffs and detaching the vital parts of the machinery of the mills was carried on under the protection of the Derbyshire Regiment and the 77th Battery. That of reconnoitring was undertaken by the force under Colonel Jefferies, R.A., and it was discovered that the Boers, who were supposed to have evacuated Stormberg, were within a two-mile range. A survey of the Boer position was made by the Engineers, and the troops returned to camp well satisfied with the result of their labours.

No larger martial moves could be attempted, for General Gatacre lived in a chronic state of suspended activity for lack of reinforcements. The Dutchmen had now fallen back from Stormberg, leaving only a small garrison there, and established themselves near Burghersdorp. The Boer strength in this district was estimated at about 4500, a force made up for the most part of Free Staters and Cape rebels. On the 18th of January General Gatacre moved some three hundred of all ranks from Bushman's Hoek

The Transvaal War

to Loperberg, and the 74th Field Battery, with one company of Mounted Infantry, from Sterkstroom to Bushman's Hoek. The Boers continued a system of annoyance and petty progress by destroying railway bridges in the neighbourhood of Steynsburg and Kromhoogte, about eleven miles from Sterkstroom, and damaging portions of the line near Stormberg.

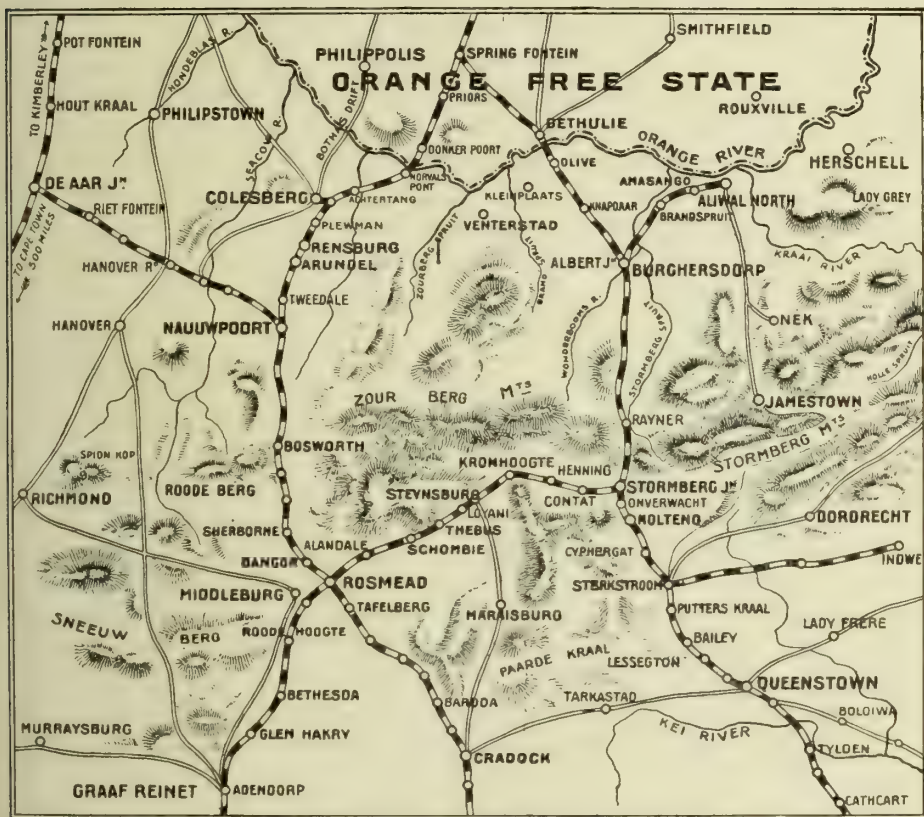
Though General Gatacre's Division was merely the shadow of the division it should have been, and his strength, such as it was, materially thinned by reverse, he had at his elbow one man who was a host in himself. This man was Captain de Montmorency. He kept the Boers who were holding Stormberg in a simmering state of excitement and suspense. He and his active party of scouts were perpetually reconnoitring and skirmishing and emerging from very tight corners, getting back to camp by what in vulgar phrase is called "the skin of their teeth." One of these narrow escapes was experienced on the 16th January, when Captain de Montmorency and his men went out from Molteno to gain information regarding the whereabouts of the enemy. A smart combat was the result of their efforts, and when they were almost surrounded Major Heylen with sixty Police came to the rescue, and the whole force, after some animated firing, returned safely to Molteno, plus horses, mares, foals, and oxen, which had been captured from the enemy.

At this time a curious correspondence took place between the Boer Commandant, General Olivier, and General Gatacre. It was a species of Dutch *tu quoque*—the Boer leader thinking to charge the British one with the same tricks as those in which his countrymen had been detected.

General Olivier solemnly declared that a store of ammunition had been found in an abandoned British waggon—a waggon marked with red crosses and purporting to be an ambulance waggon. General Gatacre emphatically denied the "slim" impeachment. He forwarded affidavits sworn by Major Lilly, R.A.M.C., who was the last man with the waggon before it had to be abandoned, who stated that if such ammunition had been found it had been subsequently deposited there. General Gatacre further informed the Commandant that the practice of taking wives and children in or near camp and allowing them to run the risks common to belligerents was contrary to the rules of civilised warfare, and desired to point out the responsibility he incurred in so doing. He further remonstrated that a servant who had been on the field of battle to assist Father Ryan in the succour of the wounded had been detained in the Boer camp after assurances of his release had been made. To these remarks and complaints the General received no reply.

Life with General Gatacre

Fortunately, our wounded who were not captured were doing well. The ladies at Sterkstroom were particularly devoted, and visited and cheered the sick daily, and carried them little luxuries which were mightily appreciated. Though there were not many losses, sick and disabled were constantly being carried into the hospital as the result of reconnoitring and scouting expeditions,



MOVEMENTS OF GATACRE AND FRENCH.

which were ceaseless, and had to continue ceaseless, owing to the inability of the force to take powerful action.

On the 20th of January Lieutenant Nickerson, R.A.M.C., who had accompanied the wounded after the misfortune at Stormberg, arrived in camp. Father Ryan's servant, on whose account General Gatacre, as already mentioned, addressed Commandant Olivier, also returned. They brought interesting news. More guns had been brought on the scene, and these were served by German gunners. Septuagenarians and striplings were drafted into the commandoes, while at Burghersdorp the Town Guard was composed of lads of about thirteen years of age. This showed that

The Transvaal War

the stream of reinforcements was beginning to run dry. Many youngsters were said to have been sent from their college at Bloemfontein straight to the front.

Commandant Olivier now took the opportunity to announce that he meant to retain as prisoners all correspondents who might be captured. The correspondents were flattered, and began to calculate whether "Experiences in Pretoria" would make good "copy," but finally decided for the liberty of the press.

A little innocent diversion was provided by the Boers during the night of the 20th. The British were awakened by furious fire, which was continued for some time. Great consternation prevailed, till it was afterwards discovered that a scare in the Boer lines had taken place, and the sound of some stampeding cattle had been mistaken for the advance of the British! The Boers had at once flown to arms, fired right and left in the midnight darkness, and as a natural consequence shot some of their own cattle!

After this, there was silence, like the ominous lull which comes before a storm. Little puffs and pants of hostility took place around Sterkstroom and Penhoek, while at Colesberg the Boers were on guard, with the fear of some impending ill. Important developments were dreaded. It was known that swarms of troops were moving from the Cape, and that the positions which had hitherto been held by the Federals in consequence of the weakness of British forces in all quarters, would soon be tenable no longer. And the waverers began to shake in their shoes. They began suddenly to adopt a helpful attitude towards the forces. The fact was, Lord Roberts had issued a proclamation encouraging Free Staters and Transvaalers to desert by the promise that they should be well treated. To the Colonial rebels he had diplomatically tendered the advice to surrender before being caught in *flagrante delicto*.

WITH GENERAL FRENCH

While all eyes were turned in the direction of the Natal force for the relief of Ladysmith, General French was making things lively for the Boers. It may be remembered that he left Ladysmith immediately before Sir George White's garrison was hemmed in, and betook himself to the central sphere of war. On the 23rd of November, with a reconnoitring force consisting of a company of the Black Watch, some mounted infantry, police, and the New South Wales Lancers, he went by train towards Arundel, and was fired on by Boers who were sneaking in the hills. Three of the party were wounded, but the rest drove the enemy off. The rails had been lifted just in front of the scene of the fight. From this time activities of the same kind took place daily, the General devoting his energies to reconnoitring east and west of his position,

With General French

keeping the enemy from massing at any given point, and forcing them to remain on the *qui vive* in perpetual expectation of attack.

Scouting at this time was carried on to the extent of a fine art. Never a day was devoid of excitement. "We start out before dawn, and get back—well, when we can!" This was the pithy description of a youngster who enjoyed some thrilling moments. The following sketch of the experiences of a New Zealander show how one and all willingly risked their lives in the service of their country :—

"I was under fire for the first time on my birthday (Dec. 7), when a section of us (four men) were sent out as a mark for any Boers to shoot at. We rode to the foot of a kopje and left one of us in charge of the four horses. Another chap and I climbed to the top. Puff! bang went three shells from their Long Tom and a perfect fusillade of bullets. It is marvellous how we escaped. We were to report as soon as we were fired at, so I volunteered as galloper to go back to our lines to report. I did a quick time over that two miles of veldt, bullets missing me all the time. I reported, and was told to go back and withdraw the men, which I did. Afterwards we took eight men, and under cover kept up a steady fire for five hours. I was horribly tired, as I had been in the saddle eighteen hours the previous day. My mate was fresh—we were planted behind stones in pairs—and while he kept up the firing I slumbered, strange as it may seem. There are thousands of troops in the camp. General French, in command of this particular division, has complimented us on many occasions on our coolness under fire and our horsemanship. He said we could gallop across country where English cavalry could only walk. He told us after a skirmish we had with the enemy that he couldn't express in words his admiration of us, that we were the best scouts he had ever employed, and that we always brought in something, either prisoners, horses, sheep, cattle, or valuable information—which latter is entirely true. During the slack time our chaps are busy breaking in remounts for the English cavalry. Horses die like flies here, and Cape ponies are substituted."

Numerous and ingenious tricks were practised on the Boers, many of them doubtless owing their origin to the active and fertile brains of General French and Colonel Baden-Powell, the author of the "Manual on Scouting." One of these was to take in the enemy's scouts by tethering ostriches to bushes on the hills. The presence of the birds naturally gave to the place an air of desolation, and satisfied the enemy that the ground was unoccupied. In Colonel Baden-Powell's opinion fine scouting is a true bit of hero-work, and his description of the "sport" in his own words serves to show of what stuff our Colonial scouts were made. He says : "It is comparatively easy for a man in the heat and ex-

The Transvaal War

citement of battle, where every one is striving to be first, to dash out before the rest and do some gallant deed ; but it is another thing for a man to take his life in his hand to carry out some extra dangerous bit of scouting on his own account, where there is no one by to applaud, and it might be just as easy for him to go back ; that is a true bit of hero's work, and yet it is what a scout does continually as 'all in the day's work.' The British scout has, too, to be good beyond all nationalities in every branch of his art, because he is called upon not only to act against civilised enemies in civilised countries like France and Germany, but he has also to take on the crafty Afghan in his mountains, or the fierce Zulu in the open South African towns, the Burmese in his forests, the Soudanese on the Egyptian desert, all requiring different methods of working, but their efficiency depending in every case on the same factor—the pluck and ability of the scout himself. To be successful as a scout you must have plenty of what Americans call 'jump' and 'push,' 'jump' being alertness, wideawakeness, and readiness to seize your opportunity, 'push' being a never-say-die feeling. When in doubt as to whether to go on or to go back, think of that and of the Zulu saying, 'If we go forward we die, if we go backward we die ; better go forward and die.' Scouting is like a game of football. You are selected as a forward player. Play the game ; play that your side may win. Don't think of your own glorification or your own risks—your side are backing you up. Football is a good game, but better than it, better than any other game, is that of man-hunting." Of this game, our troops, particularly in the disaffected regions of Cape Colony, were beginning to have their fill.

On the 8th of December Colonel Porter, with the 5th Dragoon Guards and Mounted Infantry, arrived at Arundel from Naauwpoort, for the purpose of making a reconnaissance and locating the enemy and discovering his strength. The force detrained some four miles outside the town and advanced across the plain, the Dragoons to left and right, the Mounted Infantry, consisting of New Zealanders and Australians, in the centre slightly in the rear. The Boers in the surrounding kopjes, seeing their danger, took themselves off with great rapidity to another ridge three miles to the north. This position was located before nightfall. At daybreak four companies of Mounted Infantry were posted on a hill two miles north of Arundel, while a troop of Dragoons reconnoitred the town and found it evacuated by the enemy. The advance was then resumed. At 8 A.M. the troops reached Maaiboschlaagte, and spied the enemy on the hills near Rensburg's Farm. The Boers were busy dragging a huge gun up the hill. Having no artillery, the flanking movement on the left was discontinued, but the Dragoons on the right, who were three miles in advance of the remainder of the force, crossed

With General French

the plain and outflanked the enemy. The crackling of muskets followed, and soon after the booming of two guns. The New South Wales Lancers now reinforced the first line, and though for many hours their "baptism of fire" was prolonged, they suffered the only loss of the day—the loss of a horse. The operations were successful, and the strength of the enemy was found to number about 2000. The occupation of this region by our troops was considered of great strategical importance, as it formed a convenient advance base for further operations. The town is situated some twelve miles from Colesberg, and is in a fashion a natural fortress. It consists of rugged hills surrounding flats, and is provided with refreshing water springs.

On the 12th of December a patrol under Lieutenant Collins was fiercely fired upon; a sergeant of the Carabineers was killed and a private was reported missing. This happened as they were turning away from a farm at Jaysfontein belonging to Field-Cornet Geldenhuis, with whom they had had an interview. The proprietor received his just deserts, for later on two squadrons of Carabineers with two guns and a company of Mounted Infantry were sent out to shell the farm, which duty was accomplished with zest and thoroughness. General French's report of the affair is too interesting to be omitted. He said:—

"I wish particularly to bring to notice the excellent conduct and bearing of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles, commanded by Major A. W. Robin, on one of these occasions.

"On 18th December I took them out with a battery of Horse Artillery to reconnoitre round the enemy's left flank, and determined to dislodge him from a farm called Jasfontein lying on his left rear. The guns shelled the farm, and the New Zealand Mounted Rifles then gained possession of it. But the enemy very suddenly brought up strong reinforcements and pressed on us with his Artillery. Our Artillery had been left some way behind to avoid this latter fire, and I had to send back some distance for its support, during which time we were exposed to a heavy musketry fire from the surrounding hills. The conduct of the New Zealanders was admirable in thus maintaining a difficult position till the Artillery caused the enemy to retire."

Early on the morning of the 13th patrols were again fired upon, this time from Platberg, a kopje on the fringe of Colesberg Commonage. About 4 A.M., in the dusk of early dawn, the Dutchmen, some 1800 strong, were found to be leaving their position and advancing in the direction of Naauwpoort. Thereupon Colonel Porter, with Carabineers, Inniskillings, 10th Hussars, and four guns of the R.H.A., moved eastwards. What Mr. Gilbert describes as "a short sharp shock" followed, and the enemy's guns, after firing three shots, were silenced. Our cavalry headed the enemy off, and soon after 2 P.M. the bulk of his forces retired to their former position. Vaalkop was held by one squadron of cavalry and two guns for the rest of the day. Some Boers remained at

The Transvaal War

Talboschlaagte, and some later on occupied Kuilfontein Farm, but were driven out by British shells with loss of forty killed and wounded. Our own losses during two days' sharp work amounted to one man killed. Captain Moseley (Inniskillings) was slightly wounded, and four men also received injuries.

On the same date Colonel Miles reported from Orange River an unlucky incident. Part of the Mounted Infantry under Captain Bradshaw and the Guides under Lieutenant Macfarlane patrolled in the direction of Kamak and Zoutspansdrift, ten miles east of Orange River, for the purpose of reconnoitring and reporting the strength of the enemy. The Boers were said to be holding the drift, and near there, somewhat suddenly, a strong party of them appeared. The Mounted Infantry attacked, and a brisk engagement followed, with the result that the enemy decamped to Geemansberg. Unfortunately, for this smart piece of work Captain Bradshaw paid with his life; Lieutenant Greyson (Buffs) was wounded, three men were killed, and seven wounded. Captain Bradshaw was an energetic and valuable officer, and his loss was deeply deplored.

To return to General French. Hard days of work in a broiling sun with little to show for it were the lot of those around Naauwport at this time. On the morning of the 15th two guns of the Horse Artillery, going eastward across the veldt from Vaalkop, shelled a Boer waggon which had been espied winding along the road. It was presumably from Colesberg, and laden with supplies for the artillery of the enemy. Several shells were at once launched, but they failed to strike it. The artillery then tried a new position, and were "sniped" at by odd sharpshooters from the hills. Finally a "Long Tom" was brought by the Boers to bear on the situation, and then the artillery, pursued by shells, returned to Vaalkop.

Boer aggression continued. On the 16th the enemy took up a position on a hill near Kannaksolam and sniped at the British patrols when they went to water their horses. The Dutchmen were splendidly concealed, so splendidly that it was impossible for the patrols to return the fire. The New Zealanders were also fired upon, and though five scouts lay for hours on the hill watching the Boers' hiding-place, not one of the foe showed his nose out of cover. At last, in the afternoon, Captain Jackson, with eight Carabineers on patrol, caught sight of the enemy peeping from his lair, and suddenly found himself in the midst of a volley. Captain Jackson was shot in the spine and instantly killed, the other members of the party and the riderless horse fleeing amid a storm of bullets. On the morning of the 18th the remains of the gallant officer were buried at Naauwpoort with military honours. The enemy's position was shelled at daybreak by ten guns.

On the same day General French made a successful reconnais-



A RECONNAISSANCE IN FORCE WITH GENERAL FRENCH'S CAVALRY NEAR COLESBERG.

Drawing by R. Caton Woodville.

With General French

sance with a battery of Horse Artillery and the New Zealand Rifles. The New Zealanders had some exciting experiences. Major Lee and his men went forth to draw the fire of the Boers, and unfortunately, instead of drawing the shell of the enemy they drew the shot, and found themselves all at once in a very warm corner indeed. They were rapidly hemmed in on three sides, and stood a very good chance of being cut off. But pluck carried the day, and though all their accoutrements, saddles, and water-bottles showed visible signs of the hurricane of destruction through which they had ridden, they arrived in camp safe and sound, much to the satisfaction of the General, who issued an order complimenting them on the success of their reconnaissance.

Major Lee, who was in command of the New Zealanders at Arundel, was reported to be a splendid fellow—not the typical dashing officer by any means, but what was described as a regular paterfamilias of somewhat aldermanic proportions. He was hale, hearty, and beaming, and withal a man of coolness and courage. The qualities possessed by this officer were said to be shared by most of his men, who, though of the rough and ready stamp, were true chips of the old British block.

Mr. Gifford Hall was most enthusiastic about Colonials all and sundry, and, knowing their excellence and Great Britain's needs, delivered himself of words of wisdom which are worthy of repetition:—

“Ex-frontier cavalryman myself, with further experience as cowboy in both the United States and North-west Canada, and also as stockrider in Australia, I have never for a moment doubted that in the raising of an irregular Anglo-Boer force lay the solution of England's problem, ‘How to successfully cope with the enemy.’ Sans standard of physique, sans much orthodox training, sans everything but virility, inherent horsemanship, inherent wild-land craft, mounted on his own pony—bronco of Canada or brumbie of Australia—the Canadian ranche hand, the Australian stockrider, shearer, station rouseabout, or the ‘cull’ of all lands Anglicised might easily become the quintessence of a useful and operative force against a semi-guerilla enemy. A pair of cord breeches, a couple of shirts, his big hat, and a cartridge-filled belt, Winchester carbine, a pony of the sort that can be run to a white sweat, and staggering, tremble, and then be kicked out to nuzzle for grass or die—that's what your man wants. The pants and shirts will be better than he has worn for years; the gun he has ‘shot straight’ with ever since he first handled his ‘daddy's’ muzzle-loader; and the ‘hoss,’ why each is of the other, horse and man, each apart, a thing inept. Orthodoxy against the Boers in military operations doesn't wash. Aldershot-cum-Sandhurst-cum-Soudan-cum-Further-India and War-Office tactics fall flat. The Boer is here, there, and everywhere, not to be followed by ‘crushing forces’—only to be checked and turned and tracked and harried and hustled by a brother Boer. There is scarce a Canadian ranche hand but owns a pony of bronco breed, scarce an Australian station hand of any decent calibre but owns or can procure a tough and serviceable semi-‘brumbie’ mount. And will these men volunteer? Yes, plenty of them, and those that won't can't. Surely Empire saved or gained is worth their worth to

The Transvaal War

the Motherland they fight for. Let her hire them. Transportation and time? The Boer war is not over yet, and England's pocket is deep. To-day she fights for her life, for her honour, and win she must. Arm them and saddle them, men of the wild-lands and prairies. Work them van, flank, and rear. This folly of 'standard' physique and 'training'—to the winds with it. The theory of weight and height for effective fighting is exploded. Heart, eye, and seat, and wild-land inherent tact make up for it. Five-feet-six can ride and shoot and fight or die as well as six-feet-two. We wild-landers have proven it over and over again. Even when the war is over, and our regulars and reserves must return, make these men into protective police for a while, officered not by orthodoxy but by knowledge and experience. They will 'learn the country.' They will evolve scouts from amongst them who shall make no mistakes. They will give to England what she needs in times like these—to come again or not. Your yeomanry won't do the trick; nor your oat-fed kharki-clad higher Colonials either. 'Tis your Anglo-Boer, cowboy, stockrider, shearer, rouse-about, cull, given his way and a cause—yes, he and his scrub-fed mongrel mount and 'gun.'"

These expressions of opinion almost amounted to a prophecy, for very shortly the Canadian ranche hands, the Australian stockriders, the hardy New Zealanders, and the "higher" Colonials—as Mr. Hall styled them—taught us lessons which we were swift enough to follow.

At Christmas the troops fared well, and contributions of a homely and delectable kind were supplied to make the season pleasurable. The inhabitants of Naauwpoort showed their appreciation of Mr. Thomas Atkins in many tangible ways, notably by providing him with appetising refreshments as he arrived by rail. Of course, there was a run on the telegraph office. Christmas greetings went pouring out and came pouring in, while the mail-bags swelled with a plethora of seasonable blandishments. At Arundel Colonel Fisher and the officers of the 10th Hussars endeavoured to forward Christmas greetings to the Colonel of the Regiment, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, but for some unexplained reason the felicitation was not allowed to go beyond the vigilant eye of the censor.

The great attraction of Christmas, and its accompaniment the New Year, was the expectation of a gift from Queen Victoria, which was specially prepared according to the order of the Sovereign herself. It was to take the form of a tin of chocolate, and was to be presented to every soldier on service in South Africa. The box was specially designed, and adorned with the regal monogram. This unique gift, in order to make it the more valuable as a trophy or a family relic, was manufactured only of the exact number required for presentation to each individual serving at the front.

Naauwpoort enlivened itself with sports, and though the weather was almost tropical, the activity served to compensate for the absence of the mirth of Merrie England. At this time the Boers were approaching nearer the British camp. There was a three

With General French

days' truce, it is true, but their positions were only six miles from our troops, and they were warned that a nearer approach would mean prompt action by the guns.

The daily routine went on somewhat monotonously—the grooming, watering, and exercising of horses; drilling, exercising the mules of ambulance and transport waggons; unloading the food supplies, cooking them—occupations which afforded work in plenty, but the real business of warfare was suspended. Some of the officers made an effort to get up hunting parties, and succeeded in bagging a few springbuck, but their expeditions were fraught with even more risk to themselves than to their quarry. For instance, in one case, while two gallant Nimrods were in the act of stalking a splendid springbuck, their chargers made off. They suddenly found themselves almost surrounded by Boers, and an animated chase followed. Luckily the carcass of the springbuck, which was left behind, was too great a prize to be parted with, and the enemy captured it in preference to the huntsmen!

At this time there was great consternation in camp, as two cavalry officers were taken prisoners. It subsequently transpired that the officers, Lieutenant Till (Carabineers) and Lieutenant Hedger (attached to the 10th Hussars), were captured through an unfortunate accident. They mistook the Boers for New Zealanders, and therefore were unprepared to offer resistance. On discovering their error they made a desperate attempt to escape, but were overpowered.

The Colonials afterwards discarded their picturesque hats and took to helmets. Owing to the resemblance of their headgear to that of the Boers, some British pickets had mistaken them for the enemy and fired on them.

On the 29th the enemy fell back on Colesberg, and there with his small force General French proceeded to tackle him. "So near and yet so far" must have been repeated many times by both Generals French and Gatacre when each failed to accomplish some clever moves for want of the necessary reinforcements. In the ordinary course of things, from Naauwpoort to Sterkstroom was an easy three-hours journey by rail, but now, with the barrier of the Boers at Stormberg—the junction between the East London and Port Elizabeth systems—it was necessary to travel, if by rail, *via* Port Elizabeth, thus making a three-days instead of a three-hours trip. And railway travelling was by no means a safe and enjoyable exercise. True, the lines of communication were protected by some eleven hundred Volunteers, but as martial law had not been proclaimed south of Naauwpoort, and disloyalty was here the rule and not the exception, it was quite on the cards that at any moment culverts would be found blown up and rails twisted.

CHAPTER IV

THE COLONIALS AT BELMONT

ON Christmas Day Lieut.-Colonel Pilcher, formerly of the Northumberland Fusiliers, late of the Bedfordshire Regiment, arrived at Belmont and took command of the troops. The Station Staff now consisted of Colonel Pilcher; Major Bayly, Major MacDougall, and Major Dennison. The garrison was soon strengthened by two companies of the 2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry under Major Ashby. A general state of high polish was begun, and the Canadians, ever active and on the alert, came in for some excellent training, which they were not slow to profit by. Owing to the insecure state of the neighbourhood, it was put in a fair state of defence. Stone sconces were built on the kopjes; earthwork trenches were built at the station and elsewhere; and a series of alarm drills was carried on, in order to enable all concerned to take up their especial posts at a moment's notice. For instance, at an appointed hour an alarm on the bugles would wake the echoes. The men would rush to arms; every company, previously instructed, would fall in on its own private parade ground, and then set out at the double for its post. Celerity without fluster was the motto of the movement. When all were posted, some in trenches a mile off, others three or four hundred yards away, the Colonel would proceed to make such disposition of his troops as the imagined enemy might impose. For instance, he would picture the attack coming from the north-east and march some of his force in the direction of the assumed attack, covering it with a strong line of skirmishers, while other troops in springless four-wheeled buck waggons were sent to their support. The movement would be only sufficiently developed to give the men an intelligent appreciation of what might be required of them, and certainly nothing could exceed the promptness and alacrity with which the troops threw themselves into their military rehearsals. The Canadians especially distinguished themselves by their zest and acuteness, and in all the bogus engagements—the attack drill—earned the praise of the commander. The following is a copy of a regimental order: "The officer commanding the Royal Canadian Regiment is desired by the officer commanding the troops at this station to express his satisfaction with the intelligent and quiet way in which this morning's work was carried out by the officers, non-com-

Colonel Pilcher's Raid

missioned officers, and men of the Royal Canadian Regiment." The Colonel particularly appreciated the manner in which the men avoided "bunching," the most fatal error that can be made by troops in modern warfare of the kind in hand.

At the end of the year more Australians arrived. These troops had been stationed for a short time at the Orange River, getting their horses into condition after a six weeks' voyage. From thence they moved on to Belmont. The two companies of Queensland's Mounted Infantry found their green tents awaiting them, and a hearty welcome. The men, a hardy and stalwart set, tall and comely to look on, were well fitted in their kharki uniform, which showed no signs of relationship to the slouching apparel peculiar to hastily rigged-out troops. Their jackets, cord breeches, felt hats looped up at the side with a tuft of feathers of the emu, gave them a picturesque as well as workmanlike air. But their leggings were dangerously dark, and scarcely as suited to sand or morass—the ground was either one thing or the other—as the familiar puttees. These useful articles had now been assumed by the Canadians instead of their shrunken or loosely flapping duck trousers. The effect was infinitely more dapper, becoming to the figure, and serviceable for hard wear. The Queenslanders and Canadians at once fraternised, the older arrivals making the new comers welcome by inviting them to drinks and breakfast, and generally "showing them around." The bond of union was cemented by the fact that the officer in command of the Queenslanders, Colonel Ricardo, was an old Royal Canadian Artillery officer.

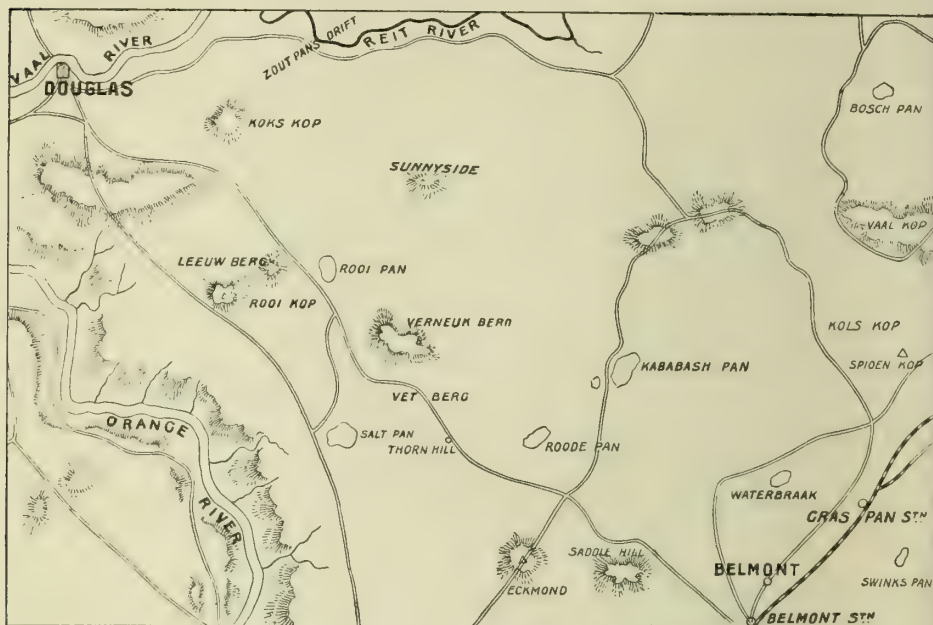
COLONEL PILCHER'S RAID

New Year's Day was a great occasion for the Colonial troops. They had been burning with impatience to come in touch with the enemy, and till now no opportunity had been afforded for testing their prowess in the field. At midday on the 31st of December a force under Colonel Pilcher started off from Belmont. The force consisted of 200 Queenslanders, commanded by Colonel Ricardo; 100 Canadians, Toronto Company, with two guns; and a horse battery under Major de Rougemont; 30 Mounted Infantry under Lieutenant Ryan (Munster Fusiliers); the New South Wales Ambulance, under Surgeon-Major Dodds; and 200 Cornwall Light Infantry. These left Belmont and proceeded westward. Twenty miles were covered before sunset, and the force encamped at Cook's Farm. In this region, on a string of kopjes, a Boer laager was reported to be, and this—it was decided—must be removed.

Colonel Pilcher's programme, however, was not divulged. Great

The Transvaal War

caution was preserved, as the country was swarming with native spies, and all movements of the troops were watched and reported to the enemy. The Colonel therefore very adroitly arranged that no person should have a chance of reporting his movements, and caused a watch to be kept on all the natives, and these during the night were shut in their huts to prevent any from escaping and communicating the intention of the troops. The vigilance was certainly well rewarded. At daybreak the force steadily marched out, creating as



MAP ILLUSTRATING COLONEL PILCHER'S RAID.

Scale 9 miles = 1 inch.

little dust as possible, and took up a position at a place some fifteen miles off, called Sunnyside. Here the enemy's laager was reported to be situated. It was posted on two connected kopjes to north and south, and towards these kopjes the troops advanced. When within a distance of some four miles the troops halted. Major de Rougemont with two guns under Lieutenant Atkinson, Captain Barker with the Toronto Company of Canadians, and Lieutenants Ryan and Smith with the Mounted Infantry were ordered in the direction of the enemy's laager to the north; while Colonel Pilcher with Colonel Ricardo and the Queenslanders, A Company under Captain Chaucer, and B Company under Captain Pinnock, advanced from the south. Patrols were sent to the east. All was done with great quietness and precision, and the Boer tactics so closely imitated that the enemy

Colonel Pilcher's Raid

were unconscious of the arrival of the British till the troops were upon them. Major Rougemont's force made use of all the existing cover, which luckily was sufficient to screen both man and horse, and in a very short time had discovered some excellent ground which gave on to the Boer position. The enemy's laager was ensconced in a nest of trees, at the base of a range of kopjes commanded by a convenient ridge. This ridge—reported by the Mounted Infantry to be clear of the enemy—with great promptness was practically seized and occupied before the Boers had sufficiently gathered themselves together to contest the position. The guns were advanced at a trot, and unlimbered within 1500 yards of the laager, into which two shells were neatly plumped, with a stupendous detonation that startled the whole surrounding neighbourhood. Up scrambled the Boers, streaming and bounding along the sides of the kopje like stampeded goats, and commencing to fire with all their might. Upon our guns and gunners came a torrent of lead fierce and sustained. Two Maxims under Captain Bell now prepared to give tongue from the right, and then the Toronto Company was ordered to double into action. They leapt to the word. With a gasp of relief they cried, "At last!" and were off. When within 1000 yards of the position their rifles came into play. A hurricane of bullets met the enemy's fire: met it, continued fiercely—and finally subdued it.

While the guns under Lieutenant Atkinson were booming and banging, the Mounted Infantry, ably led by Lieutenant Ryan, were working their way along the right, and hunting the enemy from a concealed position among the scrub. At midday Colonel Pilcher and the Queenslanders were steadily nearing the position from three separate directions. They approached under cover, cautious as tigers and nimble as cats, finally firing, and returning the fire, but only when they caught glimpses of the enemy. Then they blazed away to good purpose, and continued to approach nearer and ever nearer, till the enemy, in view of the persistent and deadly advance, shrank from his ground, and sulkily retired. The dexterity of the Queenslanders was remarkable; they stalked the enemy as a sportsman would stalk a deer, criticising their own fire and the fire of the foe with workmanlike coolness and interest. The success of these tactics was complete. The laager was captured, and with it forty ill-kempt, surly prisoners. Lieutenant Adie, who was with a patrol of four men, came suddenly on a number of the enemy, and was wounded in two places, but he was saved and carried off by two plucky fellows, Butler and Rose, who came to his rescue. The latter was wounded, and his horse was killed. Another dashing Queensland, Victor Jones, was shot through the heart, and Macleod, an equally brave comrade, after many lucky escapes, while advancing with Colonel Pilcher's force, was shot through the spine.

The Transvaal War

While these heroic and tragic doings were taking place, General Babington with a mounted force had been working hard, his operations having been arranged for the purpose of co-operating with Colonel Pilcher, and distracting the enemy's attention from the north. These manœuvres had the desired effect, and the day's work, apart from its pathetic side, was accounted a glorious success. So cleverly had the proceedings been contrived, and so ingeniously were the orders interpreted by one and all, that the Boers were completely nonplussed. There was a hurried stampede, and the Federals bolted, leaving their laager with all its luxuries, its boiling soup, its gin and water bottles, &c., at the mercy of the invaders.

A vivid description of the Boer camp was given by Mr. Frederick Hamilton of the *Toronto Globe*, who accompanied the Canadians.

"Fourteen ancient tents, their blankets, kettles, and camp utensils, tossed about in wild confusion. Three long waggons of the type in which the voortrekkers voyaged the veldt, a team of a dozen magnificent oxen, a big water-cart which we eyed greedily, a Kaffir wattled hut, its floor piled high with odds and ends of clothing and valuables, its doorway marked by a shell-smash; the rocky kopje-side behind, a flat plain dotted with shaggy, bushlike trees in front—such was the Boer laager. Prisoners came from here and there, over a score from the kopje-top, more from this corner and that of the field, and were taken to the hut. Within it and around its door they squatted, a silent downcast crew; what a mess they had made of their affairs! Perhaps they were not so despondent as we thought, for one man as he sat in the guarded group pointed out a rifle which one of the victors was carrying, and claimed it as his own—a piece of cheek which staggered our men. The prisoners claimed only part of our attention; with eager curiosity the camp was ransacked. At last we had our hands upon these Boers: what manner of men were they, and how did they live? Poorly enough, I should say; the camp must have been densely crowded with the motley gathering, and we could see the odd admixture of practical barbarism with occasional contact with civilisation, as when good suits of clothes lay side by side with repulsive-looking strips of biltong. We felt that all this was ours, ours by right of battle, ours by virtue of victory. Perhaps we were wrong, perhaps the confiscated property of rebels should fall to the Crown, but as long as men go to war so long will victors walk through the camp of the vanquished with just that feeling swelling through their veins. Something else lay heavy upon us—thirst. It raged through us. The yellow pool where the veldt cut into the kopje face filled our water-bottles, and we drank and drank. The foul dregs of the Boers' water-cart were drained with joy. As the sun was setting our own water-cart with more wholesome water drove up, and we drank and drank again. As our fires were lighted, what receptacles could be found were filled and the muddy fluid boiled. Our transport waggons were miles away, and for tea or coffee we were dependent on what we found in the Boer waggons. I remember drinking a cup of hot water and finding it most refreshing. Food was foraged. One section of our men found a sheep's carcass hanging up under a tree, slaughtered by the rebels before our shell changed the tenor of their day. Some hadhardtack or army rations in their haversacks. Here and there they picked up enough to make up a meal, not especially plentiful, and very scrappy, but satisfying. Indeed a most peculiar thing about the whole affair was the great

Queenslanders Flank Movement
Royal Canadians and Queenslanders Main Attack

Bears rushing to take up position on Kopje

Royal Munsters
Flank Movement
Bears Linger



De Rougemont's Guns

Royal Canadians

COLONEL PILCHER'S ATTACK ON SUNNYSIDE KOPIE—CANADIAN AND AUSTRALIAN CONTINGENTS RECEIVE THEIR "BAPTISM OF FIRE."

Drawing by H. C. Seppings Wright from Sketch by Fred. Villiers.

Colonel Pilcher's Raid

amount of work we managed to do on a very small amount of food. The shadows of the evening were falling as we finished our meal, sent out the necessary pickets, and prepared for rest."

Later came the death of poor Macleod the Queenslander, whose wound had been mortal. As the Queenslanders had early moved on to Rooi Pan (a farmhouse across the veldt where rebels were suspected to be in hiding), the Canadians took upon themselves the duty of conducting the sad ceremonies of burial. A grave was dug and a New Testament found. Then the Canadians slowly bore to its last resting-place the remains of the heroic young Colonial who had lost his life in the service of the mother country. Major Bayly, the Staff Officer of the expedition, read a few selections from Corinthians over the body, after which it was consigned to the heart of the veldt. A rude cross bearing his name and corps was placed to mark the spot, and written thereon was also the intimation that it was "Erected by his Queensland and Canadian comrades." The noble young fellow Victor Jones secured less formal burial, though his loss was as deeply regretted. On the following day two of his comrades from Rooi Pan started off in search of his body, and having found it, buried it without ceremony or rite, but with the keenest feelings of sorrow.

On this day, the 2nd of January, the work of destruction of Boer effects was begun. Soon after dawn a huge bonfire was made under such waggons and ammunition of the foe as could not be utilised, and as the troops marched out they were saluted by the appalling uproar of the exploding cartridges. The procession, as it moved on its way to Rooi Pan, a distance of some four or six miles, presented a somewhat mediæval aspect in spite of symbols of modernity—magazine rifles and machine guns. In front was the wide expanse of grassy veldt; behind, the curling blue smoke from the burning wreckage of the camp. Along the road came the heavy springless waggons piled high with booty, their negro drivers flourishing their long whips and repeating their vociferous bark of "Eigh" to encourage the small, contumacious mules. With them marched the bronzed, picturesque-looking army with its train of captives in the rear, an unkempt, dilapidated crew—a strange contrast to the lively and robust Canadians, who, rejoiced at their yesterday's feat, were singing as they tramped along. Very curious was it to hear, instead of the familiar British airs our soldiers love, the Niagara camp-song with its Hallelujah chorus, and the popular "The Maple Leaf" proceeding from the brawny throats of these brother soldiers of the Queen. Their joy and their triumph was complete, and with a good night's rest and the beautiful morning air to refresh them, their spirits were effervescent in the extreme.

At Rooi Pan there was a halt for half-an-hour, during which

The Transvaal War

Colonel Pilcher took the opportunity to address his force, and convey to them congratulations on the recent fight which had been forwarded by General Wood, commanding at the Orange River. Water-bottles were then filled from the clear pond in the farm of one of the prisoners, and soon, the sun growing momentarily hotter, the party advanced. This time their route lay over dust ankle-deep in places, dust which rose up in clouds and came down into eyes and ears and throats, and settled itself in hot cakes and rings on hair and beards and necks. But presently, after a few miles, the state of things was improved. Government roads stretched a smooth highway in front, and kopjes—the dangerous kopjes that afforded such comfortable hiding-places for the wily foe—grew fewer and farther between. There was now comparative comfort, for there was little fear of encounter with the enemy in the open.

The journey was continued without event. There was no sign of opposition, and about three o'clock in the afternoon, as they neared their destination, a message came in, "Nothing to be seen in Douglas but Union Jacks and red ensigns." This was a fact, and Colonel Pilcher and his troops very soon occupied the town. Never was there a more enthusiastic demonstration: the loyal inhabitants cheered to the echo; some almost wept at the arrival of their deliverers.

This town is situated below the junction of the Modder and Vaal Rivers, and is of some importance. Here the long-suffering loyalists had remained, ever since the commencement of hostilities, in anxious expectation, awaiting the arrival of the British troops. Naturally the frenzy of their delight knew no bounds, particularly when it was found how completely the rebels had dispersed. Fourteen tents, three waggons, an immense store of rifles and ammunition, saddles, forage, equipment, and many incriminating letters were seized. On some of the envelopes were stamped "On Her Majesty's Service," showing that these had been used by the newly appointed Landrost of Douglas in the absence of an official Free State superscription.

The joy of the loyalists was of short duration. In the afternoon Colonel Pilcher broke to them the terrible news. He stated that, for military reasons, his force would be obliged to leave on the morrow. Consternation prevailed. The leading members of the community explained that, if deserted, their lives would not be worth a moment's purchase. It was impossible to remain where they were and await the return of the enemy, consequently Colonel Pilcher ordered all who wished to leave to be ready by six the next morning, and promised them safe conduct to Belmont. Thereupon a scene of great animation ensued. An immense exodus was actively arranged. Vehicles of all kinds, sizes, and shapes were got ready, while the women and babies—such as overflowed the transport accommodation—were taken charge of by the gallant Canadians. These marched

Colonel Pilcher's Raid

forth singing, to keep up the spirits of the community, and finally, when the wearisome end of the journey seemed never to be reached, some of the noble fellows, although worn out with a long spell of active work, and suffering from sore feet, carried the babies, and thus relieved the women of the fatigue of the march. The cortège left Douglas at eight o'clock on the morning of the 3rd, and reached Dover Farm at two o'clock. With the refugees were sent forward the captured rebels. These before their departure were paraded, and Colonel Pilcher enjoined those who were Free Staters or Transvaalers to step from the ranks, as they would be treated as prisoners of war. The rebels who had taken up arms against their Queen would suffer different treatment. No one stepped forward, and it was evident that either there were no Boers among the number, or they mistrusted the assurances of Colonel Pilcher, and preferred to meet their fate *en bloc*. (They were subsequently sent to the Cape for trial.) Colonel Pilcher's "slim" arrangement for the confusing of the natives prior to making his advance was eminently successful, for the Boers, so a prisoner said, considered themselves deeply aggrieved that they had not received information regarding the proposed movements. On the 5th Colonel Pilcher's column arrived at Belmont. The night's march from Cook's Farm was splendidly managed. News had reached him to the effect that some 600 or 800 Boers intended to effect a junction, and attack the column. At eight o'clock, therefore, the whole force started quietly forth, stealing off in the jetty obscurity like a band of conspirators. A halt was made during the night to allow the troops a short spell of repose: after this they continued their journey without mishap. Two companies of Canadians were employed to hold a pass some six miles off Belmont, in order to prevent the incoming force being cut off by the enemy.

So ended, happily, a most successful raid. The Colonial troops had more than acted up to the expectation of every one; and, though it was somewhat disappointing that Douglas had to be instantly evacuated, the expedition had helped to demonstrate to the loyalists that the British could and would come to their aid, and that faith in the end has its reward.

The following table of their march is interesting as showing the wear and tear to which the troops were subjected:—

	Miles.
Sunday, December 31, Belmont to Thornhill	22
Monday, January 1, Thornhill to Sunnyside (action)	13
Tuesday, January 2, Sunnyside to Rooi Pan, 6 miles ; Rooi Pan to Douglas, 15 miles	21
Wednesday, January 3, Douglas to Thornhill	24
Thursday night, January 4, Thornhill to Richmond	10
Friday, January 5, Richmond to Belmont	12
Total	102

The Transvaal War

This smart little military exploit was appreciated throughout the globe. Telegrams poured in from all parts of the Queen's dominions congratulating Colonel Pilcher and the Colonials on the excellent work they had accomplished. The following from G.O.C., Cape Town, read :—

"Congratulate Colonel Pilcher on brilliant exploit, which will have far-reaching effect."

From Military Secretary, Government House :—

"Please send following message to Colonial troops employed in action at Sunnyside: 'His Excellency Sir Alfred Milner sends you his heartiest congratulations on your success, and hopes it is only the forerunner of many more. While regretting the loss of some of your brave comrades, he feels sure that your friends in the colonies over the sea will feel proud of the success of their representatives, as he himself does.'"

From Sir Redvers Buller the following was received :—

"General Buller desires that his congratulations be conveyed to the Colonial troops on their action at Sunnyside."

From the Governor, Queensland, came :—

"Request you will be good enough to convey to Queensland Mounted Infantry hearty congratulations on gallant conduct at Sunnyside and sympathy in loss of life. Second contingent embarks for South Africa next week."

ACTIVITIES AND SURPRISES

More useful work, which had a direct bearing on the events of the future, took place during Colonel Pilcher's three weeks' stay at Belmont. Soon after the Douglas expedition another excursion was devised. More Canadians were to be employed. The Queenslanders were to send such men as they could mount, their animals being, many of them, still *hors de combat* from the sea trip, and the guns and infantry were to go as a matter of course. A dive into the enemy's country was projected—one of the first deliberate incursions upon the Southern Dutch Republic. These incursions were of immense value, and served in reality as pilotage for the gigantic military engine that was shortly to sweep the way from the Cape to Bloemfontein.

At six o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, January 9, the column started. It was composed as follows :—

Royal Horse Artillery—Two guns, 45 men, 51 horses. Queensland Mounted Infantry—Two Maxims, 116 men, 106 horses. Royal Munster Fusiliers Mounted Infantry—15 men, 15 horses. Royal Canadian Regiment—Two Maxims, 293 men, 2 horses. New South Wales Army Medical Corps—Two ambulances, 18 men, 14 horses. Total—487 men, 188 horses.

The officers who were engaged in the flying column were :—

Staff—Lieut.-Col. T. D. Pilcher, P.S.C., in command; Major M. Dobell, R.C.R.I., Staff Officer; Major S. J. A. Denison, R.C.R.I., Quartermaster; Major

Activities and Surprises

Brown, Q.M.I., Transport Officer ; Lieut. Lafferty, R.C.R.I., Transport Officer ; Lieut. J. H. C. Ogilvy, in charge of R.C.R.I. machine gun section ; Capt. Pelham, Q.M.I., in charge of Queensland machine gun section ; Lieut. A. C. Caldwell, R.C.R.I., attached ; Lieut. C. W. M'Lean, R.C.R.I., attached ; Rev. J. M. Almond, chaplain. Royal Horse Artillery—Major de Rougemont and Lieut. Atkinson. Queensland Mounted Infantry—Lieut.-Col. Ricardo, Capt. Chauvel, Capt. Pinnock, Lieut. Bailey, Lieut. Glasgow. R.M.F. Mounted Infantry—Capt. Bowen, Lieut. Tyrrell. Royal Canadian Regiment—Lieut.-Col. Pelletier. A Company—Capt. Arnold, Lieut. Hodgins, Lieut. Blanchard. B Company—Lieut. Ross, Lieut. J. C. Mason, Lieut. S. P. Layborn. H Company (half-company)—Lieut. Burstall, Lieut. Willis. New South Wales Army Medical Corps—Capt. Roth, Lieut. Martin ; Capt. Dods, Queensland, attached. (Lieut.-Col. Patterson of Queensland also went with the force as a spectator.)

The troops marched out by the road skirting the kopje so gallantly stormed by the Guards, and moved over the veldt some few miles to the south-east, towards the Free State. After passing Riet Pan a wide left wheel was made, and the force struck north-east to eastwards, towards the Free State. Here the dull purple kopjes wound along in chains, dotted here and there with small plains some three or four miles in depth and width. At Blaauwbosch Pan the border was reached—the border between Griqualand West and the Southern Republic. A halt was called. The troops gathered on a circular plain fringed with high kopjes. The road, fenced across with wire, ran through the plain, and close by was a small pan or pool, which glittered like diamonds when shaken by the thunder showers ; for the sky, always overcast and threatening, now and then burst into tears. Though these tears had the effect of April showers they were mightily drenching, and the troops, in saturated overcoats like tepid sponges, pursued their march somewhat uncomfortably. In the place above described Col. Pelletier, with two companies of the Canadians, was left with orders to remain till three in the afternoon, in readiness, if occasion demanded, to reinforce Colonel Pilcher. Failing a message, he was to return to camp. The flying column proceeded, travelling north till parallel with Enslin, where Gordons and Australians were encamped, and from whence the Victorian Mounted Infantry were skirmishing. Great caution had to be observed, as it was difficult, particularly with so many Colonials about in their soft felt hats, to discern friend from foe. Scares, as may be imagined, were many. One of these took place when advancing horsemen were seen skimming the distance. These dismounted and knelt. They meant business. The excitement was intense. Signallers instantly fluttered flags, and presently, after some moments of suspense, the troops were reassured. It was a squadron of the 9th Lancers, who had come from Modder River reconnoitring, keeping the Riet between them and the Jacobsdal position. But we are anticipating.

The Transvaal War

On the first day of their march, the force enjoyed unlooked-for hospitality. About five miles east of the border was the house of one Commandant Lubbe, the commandant of Jacobsdal, a luminary of some magnitude in the Free State. He may be described as a "man of substance," to which his comfortable dwelling and flourishing surroundings testified. Upon this pastoral domain the troops, somewhat famished and fatigued, advanced. Their arrival, for the Boers, was most ill-timed and



TYPES OF ARMS—LORD DUNDONALD'S GALLOPING GUN-CARRIAGE WITH MAXIM.

(Photo by Gregory & Co., London.)

unexpected. At that very moment dinner for some fifteen persons was being spread, piping hot, on the festive board. Odours of succulent fare pervaded the atmosphere, odours inviting—tantalising! The portly Burghers were in the very act of setting to when they were warned of the approach of British scouts. A stampede followed. Departing coat-tails, and, five minutes later, mounted dots racing away to the shelter of distant kopjes—that was all that our troops on arrival beheld. But they saw something better than Boers. Their eyes lighted on the goodly array of edibles, and, presto! the officers were seated. Joyously they surrounded

Activities and Surprises

the well-equipped table, and demolished with zest and considerable humour the repast which had been prepared for their foes.

A couple of negro domestics were the sole persons left on the homestead. The place was searched; ammunition was found, and dies for casting bullets. These were promptly destroyed. Some live stock and various other useful articles were seized, including three rifles left behind in the flight of the Burghers. Presently there came a report that the enemy were in hiding in the neighbourhood of some kopjes. A rush to action was made. The Maxim gun section went to some kopjes flanking the house, the Canadian guns went to a height on the east, the Queensland ones to a height on the west. Lieutenant Willis took his section of H Company to support the Queensland guns, while Lieutenant Burstall took his section, with intrenching tools, to a ridge midway between farm and kopje, to prepare a position. Clatter and clank went the horse artillery guns to a coign of vantage on the right, whence they could spit at the enemy if they should attempt to mount or surround the big kopje in that direction, while the Queenslanders on the west commenced explorations for the reported foe. Horror! Slouch-hatted horsemen were distinctly visible—they were coming nearer and nearer—though evidences of their own caution were visible. They were not going to be trapped. Our gallant troops were as determined not to be surprised. Thus must the Kilkenny cats have commenced overtures. Both parties were wide awake! Both parties were sidling up! It was but a matter of moments, and they would promptly spring at each other's throats!

Excitement was at a supreme pitch, when the good glasses of an officer offered a revelation. The hostile hordes—the advancing horsemen—were now plainly discernible. They proved to be not bloodthirsty Boers—not an innocent crowd of ostriches that so often in the distance had been mistaken for cavalry, but only a company of Victorian Mounted Rifles from Enslin, from which place the advanced line was this time but some dozen miles distant. It was a pleasant surprise. The scouts came in contact, exchanged greetings, and the troops each went on their respective way. Colonel Pilcher's force bivouacked at the farm-house, and the next morning, the 10th of January, saw them on their return journey to Belmont. It was during this journey, as they wound homewards with their captured prizes of oxen, that more horsemen were seen in the distance—those who, as before said, were discovered to be the 9th Lancers, on business already mentioned. The force reached camp about noon. On the following day the sojourn of Colonel Pilcher in those regions came to an end. He moved on to Modder River to command the Mounted Infantry force at the front. His stay was fraught with much benefit to the troops, as

The Transvaal War

his energetic measures, smart manœuvres, and surprise drills brought the spirited Colonials to a high state of alertness and proficiency.

AT MODDER RIVER

General Methuen, as has been noted, was forced at last to fall back on his base at the Modder River, since the Boers held their position in great strength, and it became necessary to rest the men, free them from tension, and save them from unnecessary sufferings due to the scarcity of water. In addition to this, the Engineers were enabled to carry on much necessary work. Railway communication was perfected, and the permanent bridge was repaired, to provide against accident, which in case of a flood might overtake the temporary one.

On the Boer left flank, from the extreme end of Majesfontein south-eastwards to the Riet River, was comparatively open ground. Beyond the broad expanse of bush which stretched for over a thousand yards was a road leading to Jacobsdal, and farther on was flat country which offered no cover, and appeared singularly free from traps or trenches. Looking over this open ground, it seemed possible to turn the Boer flank and cut off the enemy's communications with Jacobsdal, and possibly threaten his line of retreat to the Free State.

Some one has called the Modder River the Hampton Court of Kimberley, and perhaps it was fortunate that the troops found themselves forced to halt in a locality which is one of the most picturesque in South Africa. The surroundings were comforting after the desolation of Gras Pan—with never a house to hint at humanity, and only the frowning darkness of threatening kopjes to break the monotony of the view—and the primitive prettiness of Honeynest Kloof, which boasts but a farm or two and a few trees to give it life. From this point the country became greener, the eye was relieved from the autumnal drabs and purples of the rocky hills, and began to lean affectionately on the suggestion of moistness implied by the expanse of verdure.

Across the river was the crowded railway station, choked with stores and goods waggons, and the usual medley of camp kit. On one side accoutrements, lances, swords, the steel of their scabbards glinting through the crackled coats of kharki—odds and ends of uniform—telling their tale of action—action—action—in all its phases. And close beside them were other portions of baggage seemingly the same, but—oh! how tragically different! Here were rifles and bayonets, broken, battered, and blood-stained—all that was left of the heroic dead who had acted their last drama at Majesfontein, and whose belongings, in an inert mass, seemed to confess dumbly that they were “off duty” for ever.



MAJOR-GENERAL HECTOR A. MACDONALD, C.B.

Photo by Heath, Plymouth.

At Modder River

Christmas Day was an unpleasant memory—a tropical sun overhead, a whirlwind of dust around. It is said that every man must eat a peck of dirt in his life-time, and on this day the troops certainly ate their quantum. Food and drink were ruined, and tempers into the bargain, for the day was made into one long twilight misery by a hurricane of driving dust.

The position of the Boers soon after this period grew somewhat uncomfortable. Night attacks were threatened; indeed, Lord Methuen had the Naval guns laid on to the Boer positions by day, with the order that they were to be fired by night. And the order was obeyed with zest. The Boers were on tenter-hooks. The shells burst, throwing gorgeous haloes into the Majesfontein night. Of course, the compliment was returned. Tier after tier of the Boer positions spitted and spouted and vomited flame, and the night breezes, carrying the fracas on their wings, brought it close, so close indeed, that an attack sounded as though imminent. Still our outposts were silent. Discipline kept them "mum." Still the Boers continued, and the rattle of their rifles directed at nothing in particular, and everybody in general, wakened the echoes of the hills.

There was nothing further to be done. Reinforcements had to be awaited with annoying, almost humiliating patience. The Boers were stretched from Jacobsdal on the east to a point miles away on the west of the railway; they were intrenched horse-shoe fashion, with Majesfontein for their most imposing stronghold. There was no means of outflanking them, for in order to wheel to the west the force would need to march through an arid and waterless desert. Had the march been ventured upon, the position might not have bettered, as Lord Methuen, even supposing he had succeeded in reaching Kimberley, would still have had before him the bulk of the Boer commandoes, who would have been at liberty to cut off his supplies. The "relief" of Kimberley without supplies would have been the reverse of relief.

All the British could do was to struggle to hold their ground, and make their proximity as uncomfortable as possible for the enemy. Routine went on like clockwork, save that the Modder River clock had no works. It was a child of Necessity! A broken steel rail suspended from a crossbeam was struck by the sentry with the blunt head of an axe. The stupendous clang proclaimed the hours all over the camp. The troops were not allowed too much leisure, and ennui was not permitted to reach them; they dug trenches, constructed breastworks, and generally improved the lines of defence; indeed they worked with a will at anything that came to hand. Some one, seeing them alight at a railway station, remarked: "They've left all their frills behind

The Transvaal War

them." This was truly the case. Mr. Atkins was now above the desire for display. He was workmanly in the extreme, and made himself a jack of all trades, alternately groom, labourer, cook, porter, mule-driver, laundryman, and hero! To-day he was scouring, rubbing, kharki-painting, and hoisting; to-morrow he was good-humouredly playing the rôle of his own washerwoman by the river-side. One moment he was pulling or coaxing or cudgelling obdurate mules, and apostrophising them in language peculiarly his own; the next he was rushing gallantly to the forefront to spend his heart's blood in the service of his Queen!

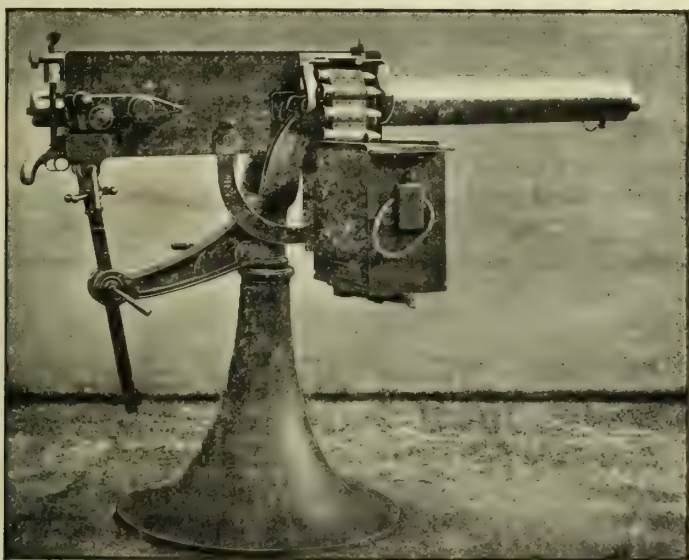
To General Wood must be given the credit of the first entry into the enemy's country. On the 6th of January, with a force of all arms, he occupied Zoutpansdrift, the place—situated north of the Orange River, in Free State territory—where gallant Captain Bradshaw met his fate. Communications between the banks of the river were maintained by means of a pontoon bridge. This was an excellent piece of work, for by holding the drift it was possible to control the progress of the Free Staters, and avert sudden raids against the railway between Orange Station and De Aar. A great deal of active though scarcely "showy" work was carried on at this time, often under the most unfavourable conditions. For instance, on the 14th of January, one of the most obnoxious and ever to be remembered dust-storms burst over the place. It made life temporarily into a bilious sea, a blinding, suffocating bath of yellow sand. Food was ruined, to say nothing of temper. Clothes were covered, eyes and throats were clogged, and the pores of the skin were caked with showers of ochreous pepper, which made every one in camp miserable for a period of quite seven hours!

Cavalry reconnaissances at this period were frequent. The troops, always in peril of their lives, explored some twenty-five miles into the Orange Free State, and found the country clear of the enemy with the exception of patrols. The Victorian Mounted Rifles under Captain M'Leish did some admirable scouting, and visited several farms, which they found had been vacated in hot haste at their approach. The country was thoroughly searched, the 9th and 12th Lancers under General Babington doing valuable work. It was this party that came in touch with Colonel Pilcher and the Queenslanders near Lubbe's Farm.

Our warriors became well versed in peculiarities of Boer homesteads. All the Dutch farms had a brotherly likeness, and were usually found at a sufficient distance from each other to carry out the Boer ideal that one man should not breathe or see the smoke from his neighbour's chimney. They commonly nestled under cover of some small kopje, and seemed as though so planted for purposes

At Modder River

of self-protection. Self-protection is the first law of nature, and the Boer character has a great reverence for first laws. In every farm was found a harmonium—on the Natal side there were pianos—and many Bibles. Some of these were valuable, and were old enough to arouse the covetous interest of the bibliophile. Most probably they were heirlooms, and had belonged to the early trekkers, who could thumb them out, text by text, when their capacity for other reading was nil. These one-storeyed abodes were composed of sun-baked bricks plastered over, and the flat roofs were lined within by ceilings of deal. Simplicity, ignorance, bad taste, and uncleanness reigned everywhere. Indeed, it was a



TYPES OF ARMS—MAXIM AUTOMATIC MACHINE-GUN (THE "POM-POM").

(By permission of Messrs. Vickers Sons & Maxim, Limited.)

matter for wonder how close to civilisation, yet how remote from it, the Dutchmen had contrived to dwell. The cattle kraals and homestead were surrounded with rudely-constructed walls of stone that in their ruggedness were not unpicturesque.

To return to camp. The Boers, determining not to be accused of lack of invention, adopted a new and ingenious dodge. In the distance from the British outposts a Highlander was observed in the act of driving cattle. As the proceeding was contrary to orders, the manœuvres of the man were carefully observed, and he was discovered to be a Boer masquerading in Highland uniform. He was at once fired upon and he fell, but succeeded in rising and making off before he could be captured.

The Transvaal War

On the 16th of January Lord Methuen made a demonstration against the left of the Boer entrenchments at Majesfontein, for the purpose of drawing off some of the force investing Colonel Kekewich's garrison. On the following day, the 17th, a similar demonstration was made, but the enemy was nothing if not "canny," and refused to be drawn. Then new tactics were tried. On the 23rd there was quite a theatrical bombardment. Night fell. The moon rose, empurpling the frowning kopjes and filling the whole foreground with magnesian radiance. Then the balmy breath of evening was ruffled with the uproar of British shells, whizzing like rockets and bursting in the Boers' lair. For full half-an-hour a brisk cannonade was maintained, neither party being in view of each other, both being wrapped in the mysterious gloom of the midnight shadows; but the echoes took up the weird tale of warring souls and repeated it into the ear of the winds. Ordinarily, shelling morning and evening was a matter of daily ritual. So many shells into the Boer trenches, so much breakfast. An hour of brisk bombardment, four hours of night's repose. Such might have been the printed programme.

On the 24th of January a tremendous reception was given to General Hector Macdonald, who arrived in the best of health and spirits, and at once took command of the Highland Brigade. With each of the officers he conversed, and apprised them of a special message entrusted to him by Lord Roberts, an attention which afforded immense satisfaction to all concerned.

The appointment of "Fighting Mac"—as he is popularly called—to the command of the Highland Brigade was full of romantic interest. As a sergeant in the Gordon Highlanders he was one of those who took part in the disastrous fight at Majuba. He was unluckily taken prisoner, but so great was his valour and dash that he even excited the admiration and appreciation of the enemy. This was testified to this remarkable man in a remarkable way. General Joubert, to show his esteem for his fine qualities as a soldier, decided on restoring to him the sword which he had necessarily surrendered. As the sword was not immediately forthcoming, the Boer commander offered a reward for it, so that it should be returned to the gallant fellow who had so nobly striven to defend it. The picture of Colonel Macdonald and his Khedivial Brigade at Omdurman was made ever present to us all through the vivid word-painting of Mr. Steevens in his book "With Kitchener to Khar-toum"; and now it is easy to realise that the kilted warrior was at the moment the right man in the right place. The men wanted him. Some were sick and sore and fretted to get a chance to distinguish themselves in the field. Tradition demanded it, and tradition was dear to them; strangely and absurdly dear, some

At Modder River

thought. Here were men exposed to the fierce sun in what the layman calls "petticoats," suffering agonies in the muscles of their scorched legs, yet enduring anything rather than part with the external attributes of their warrior land. Though the kilt and the sporran had to be extinguished under a hideous apron of kharki, and though the heat and weight of wool pleats surmounted by cotton was overwhelming, they preferred these sufferings to any change in their gear. Suggestions were offered on every side, but it was certain that nothing would overcome the conservative devotion of the Highlander for the warlike insignia of his race. Yet their plight was sometimes pitiable, particularly on occasions when, as a Scot described it, he had to take a barbed wire entanglement at "the double" and emerged "a bleeding mass, with his kilt hard a starboard, his kharki flap half left turn, and his sporran dangling on the wire." Anyhow the men of the kilt meant to hold on to all their traditions, and to take the taste of Majesfontein out of their mouths. And they were truly glad of "Fighting Mac" to help them.

Camp routine was occasionally varied and upset by locust swarms. These descended persistently for a space of about three hours, making the atmosphere dense, as though thick with snowflakes. It was a snowstorm in mourning. Down came the creatures in myriads, gobbling every blade of grass, every crumb, every edible fragment, and then, swiftly as they had come, disappearing on the wings of the wind. They were useful at times, however, for on one occasion, just as a party of troopers had almost fallen into a trap laid by the enemy, the air became suddenly dark, and presently a veil of locusts descended, entirely cutting off the British from the Boers, and enabling the former to scuttle campwards in the sudden obscurity. Not so convenient or comforting was the dust-storm, with which the troops were becoming well acquainted. The dust-storm or dust-spout is analogous to a waterspout. Columns of dust rise vertically to a height of about 150 feet in the air and promptly descend with alarming velocity, sweeping over the earth at the rate of five or six miles an hour, and making life for the time being into a state of chaos. But everything may be turned to account, and the British, being tired of Boer tricks, utilised even the sand-storm with pleasing results. One of the great difficulties of our gunners in shelling the enemy consisted in the fact that the Boers, at the first sign of fire, rushed to bomb-proof trenches. They employed look-out men to give a signal of warning. On the 29th of January, however, when the Naval gunners saw a storm brewing, they bided their time. No sooner had the whirl descended than they set to work and plumped lyddite with great success into the enemy's lines.

Coming events now began to cast their shadows before. Acti-

The Transvaal War

vities around the railroad showed that the influence of Lord Kitchener was already at work. The Royal Engineers commenced to build a strong and permanent bridge across the Modder at its confluence with the Riet. This bridge was constructed about fifteen feet above water, to insure it against the flooding of the river during the rainy season in the Free State, and enable the heaviest traffic to be carried to the scene of action. This promised shortly to be situated in the direction of Jacobsdal. Here the Boers kept a species of headquarters; and here, in the open plain dividing them from Kopjesdam, they set fire to the veldt for two miles. The conflagration began in the afternoon of Wednesday, the 31st of January, and continued throughout the night, illuminating earth and sky with weird reflections. The smoke of these fires served to act as a screen for Boer movements, for at this time the hostile armies were reinforced by troops from Barkly and Koodoosberg districts. The burning of the grass might also have been arranged with the object of procuring a black background against which the approach of winding, snake-like columns of kharki could be more distinctly visible.

There was some excitement in camp as to the reported capture of Mr. Jourdaan, the private secretary of Mr. Rhodes, who had endeavoured to pass from the beleaguered town with messages from the "Colossus" relating to the critical affairs of the moment.

On the 31st of January the British occupied Prieska unopposed. The Boers had been in possession of the place in all about five days, and had left, taking with them two prisoners, one of whom they subsequently released. Commandants Olivier and Snyman were busy recruiting, and finding themselves at a loss for combatants, were now forcing Dutchmen all and sundry to serve with the Transvaal colours. "There is no such thing as a loyal Dutchman," declared Olivier, and promptly commandeered young and old on pain of fine or imprisonment.

CHAPTER V

CHRISTMAS AT LADYSMITH

PRICES at Ladysmith had now gone up, but still those whose purses were plethoric could treat themselves to a few luxuries. Jam, for instance, was 3s. 6d. per lb., a possible price but a tantalising; while eggs were sold at about half a guinea a dozen. Whisky fetched from £5 to £7 a bottle, so there was little fear of dipsomania; and small packets of cigarettes were worth 3s. 6d. a piece. On the 23rd of December there was a grand auction. The Mayor at one time had instituted periodical auctions for the sale of the town produce, but finding competition too brisk, and fearing prices would never return to their normal level, the plan had been dropped. However, in face of Christmas there was a great sale, and the soldiers eagerly competed for bargains in the way of chickens and ducks and etceteras of the meal. In default of Covent Garden or Leadenhall, a long table at an angle of the main street was set out with inviting fare tantalizing to all but the most stoical. One Gordon was seen dragging off another in act of making an extravagant bid—"Come awa, mon! we dinna want nae sour grapes." Poultry was fetching from 8s. to 10s. a bird; while vegetables, in proportion, were more costly still. Vegetable marrows were sold for 2s. 9d. each; and carrots, homely and almost despised carrots, fetched over 3s. a bunch! As a great luxury a turkey, a goose, a sucking-pig now and then appeared on the Ladysmith board; but the ordinary domestic meal was composed of trek beef and "goat" mutton. But even these were becoming beautifully less.

Christmas passed off well. Hope revived. News of Lord Methuen's earlier victories refreshed the ears of the community, and a series of sports of various kinds helped to impart to the day a suitable air of festivity. Quantities of popular people set to work to make the day merry. Colonel Dartnell, Major Karri Davies, Colonel Rhodes—the delight of all from the Tommies to the babes—arranged a Christmas Tree. It was decorated with gifts and mottoes, "Imperial to the core," and attended by children of all sizes and degrees, even to a siege baby aged three days! But behind the scene enteric fever and dysentery flourished, and languishing in Intombi camp, two miles out, were pathetic remnants of the hale and hearty regiments who had marched to the front

The Transvaal War

in October. The other gallant warriors were now nothing more than a mob of badly-dressed scarecrows, lean and wizened, but, as one of them said, "good enough food for powder." The horses, too, had grown thin and spiritless, their anatomy was grievously obvious, and in their eyes—these erstwhile fiery eyes—there seemed to dwell the melancholy foreboding of a strange hereafter—the hereafter when sausages should be served out to the hungry, and the poor equine devotees would have spent the last of themselves to keep the British flag flying.

The message of the Queen warmed the hearts of the weary garrison. It was pleasant to know that the Sovereign, in thought, lived in the shadows as in the sunlight of Empire. Still, none but those experiencing it could plumb the depths of monotony and wretchedness. It was enough to kill the martial spirit of the most valorous, though none would own that bellicosity was exuding little by little from their wasted finger-ends. Far from it.

Sir George White maintained a series of night attacks or threats of night attacks, which served to keep the Boers uncomfortably on the *qui vive*, and these, as a necessary return, indulged in exasperating bombardment during the day. On the 26th as many as 176 shells were flung into the town before nine in the morning, independently of the action carried on by the Maxim automatic guns. It was plain the Boers considered that the inactivity of Christmas Day must be atoned for, and therefore the guns were plied with additional ardour. On the 27th, unfortunately, their murderous efforts were more than rewarded. A shell was fired from the Creusot gun on Bulwana, which dropped into the Devons' mess at Junction Hill. There, were congregated many of the officers, and of these Lieutenant Dalziel and Lieutenant Price-Dent were killed. Many others were wounded. Lieutenant Twist was injured in five places, and Lieutenants Scafe, Kane, Field, Byrne (Inniskilling Fusiliers), Tringham (Royal West Surrey), and Captain Lafone—who had been previously wounded at Elandslaagte—were all more or less mutilated.

On the 28th the Naval Battery took on itself to avenge the loss of the noble fellows who had fallen victims to the Bulwana gun, and directed at it, or rather at its gunners, six well-intentioned shots from the 4.7 inch and 12-pounder, with the result that the voice of the aggressor was temporarily silenced. There was some satisfaction in the feeling that the gunners who had created such awful havoc and regret had met their deserts. Both Lieutenant Dalziel and Lieutenant Price-Dent were particularly promising young officers, having both seen service with Sir William Lockhart on the Indian frontier, the latter having also served in the Chitral Relief Force. A sentiment of gloom mingled with fury

The Attack on Wagon Hill

disturbed the fortitude of the gallant party, and the only satisfaction they enjoyed was calculation and speculation as to what form Sir Redvers Buller's next move would take. "When will Buller come, and how?" such were the questions which were repeated scores of times during the day.

The cessation of the fire from Bulwana was certainly cheering, and from various sources it was discovered that the Boers were becoming nervous in fear of night attacks and the destruction of more of their big guns. Their state of mind was not evidenced entirely by their conduct, for two plugged shells fired into the camp were found to contain a hunk of plum-pudding and the compliments of the season.

Sickness, as we know, was rife, but fortunately there were many doctors of repute in the town, members of the Army Medical Department, and also independent practitioners. There was Dr. Jameson, whose ability was for years testified at Kimberley, and also Dr. Davies of Johannesburg; these assisted materially in giving advice, but unfortunately medicines were now growing scarce, and milk, though some invalids could digest nothing else, was not to be had. It is too pathetic to deal with the losses that must have occurred through the lack of suitable nourishment for those whose cases, not in themselves serious, only required care and sustenance.

The bombardment on the first day of the New Year had tragic results. A shell crashed into the house of Major Vallentine and killed a soldier servant named Clydesdale. Later, another shell burst near the railway station, where a cricket match between the railway officials and bridge guards was taking place, and killed Captain Vallentine Todd. The unlucky player was in the act of bowling, and dropped with the ball still in his hand.

THE ATTACK ON WAGON HILL

Our midnight surprises had not been without their lesson, and now the Boers conceived the brilliant, the desperate idea of emulating British example, and bringing Ladysmith to her knees by assault in the small hours. Some three days before the event, a Kaffir deserter had warned the besieged that an attack was contemplated; that it had been decided among the Boers that a large force must be moved up from the neighbourhood of Colenso, and that a final assault at arms must be attempted. The warning was pooh-poohed. Kaffir tales were almost as prevalent as flies! It was proverbial that night attacks to the Dutchman were taboo—they were dangerous, they tried the nerves, and cold steel glittered horribly in the moonlight. So Ladysmith slept. But as a matter of fact the Kaffir was right. These arrangements had taken place,

The Transvaal War

and two storming parties from the Heidelberg and Harrismith commandoes were promised immediate return to their homes if they should succeed in the hazardous enterprise. Accordingly, on the evening of the 5th of January they arranged a plan which on Saturday the 6th they almost carried out. The main object of their attack, they decided, should be on the western side of the perimeter, where a crescent-shaped, flat-topped eminence divided them from the town. At the south point of this crescent was placed Cæsar's Camp, bounded on the east by the Klip River, and at the west point, a distance of some four miles, was a post known as Wagon Hill. Close to this was a twin plateau called Wagon Hill West. Cæsar's Camp was guarded by the Manchester Regiment, the 42nd Field Battery, and a Naval 12½-pounder gun. Only half a battalion of 60th Rifles were on Wagon Hill, while two squadrons of Imperial Light Horse were on Wagon Hill West. Against these positions the enemy decided to make their concentrated attack. The dark-some steeps were almost perpendicular, and afforded excellent cover for approach. In some respects they resembled Majuba, where a man climbing up was almost invisible till he came face to face with his quarry. Some three hundred warrior-farmers of the Harrismith commando arranged secretly to gather in Fournier's Spruit, a dry nullah which intersected the base of the position, and there wait till the gloom of the small hours should give them the chance they were expecting. Their plan was to divide in two columns. The one, under the Harrismith Commandant, De Villiers, was to attack the steeps of Wagon Hill West, while the other, in concert, was to crawl to the nek or slope which united that hill with Wagon Hill proper, and thus cut off the former hill from the rest of the camps. In this way, should the plan succeed, they hoped to make the southern peak of the hill, Cæsar's Camp, untenable. Accordingly, divesting themselves of shoes, they started off, and under cover of darkness, like stealthily slinking panthers, approached, from different points, the British lines. It so happened that a Hotchkiss gun and some Naval guns were being placed in position on the top of Wagon Hill West. Possibly these guns may have tempted the enemy. They would be useful, they thought, to capture and turn on camp or town. All day and all night the Royal Engineers and Bluejackets had been labouring to get the weapons into position, and at this hour the party were taking a "breather" after their long and arduous efforts. With them, to cover their operations, were the King's Royal Rifles and the Gordon Highlanders, who occupied a post on the front and flank. The fatigue party were resting, as before stated. Suddenly, in the stillness of the night, a curious and unusual sound was heard. The velvety sound of a muffled footfall. A crumbling as of broken earth. Ears pricked up. The sentry at

The Attack on Wagon Hill

once cried out, "Who goes there?" "Friend," was answered, and the next moment the sentry dropped dead!

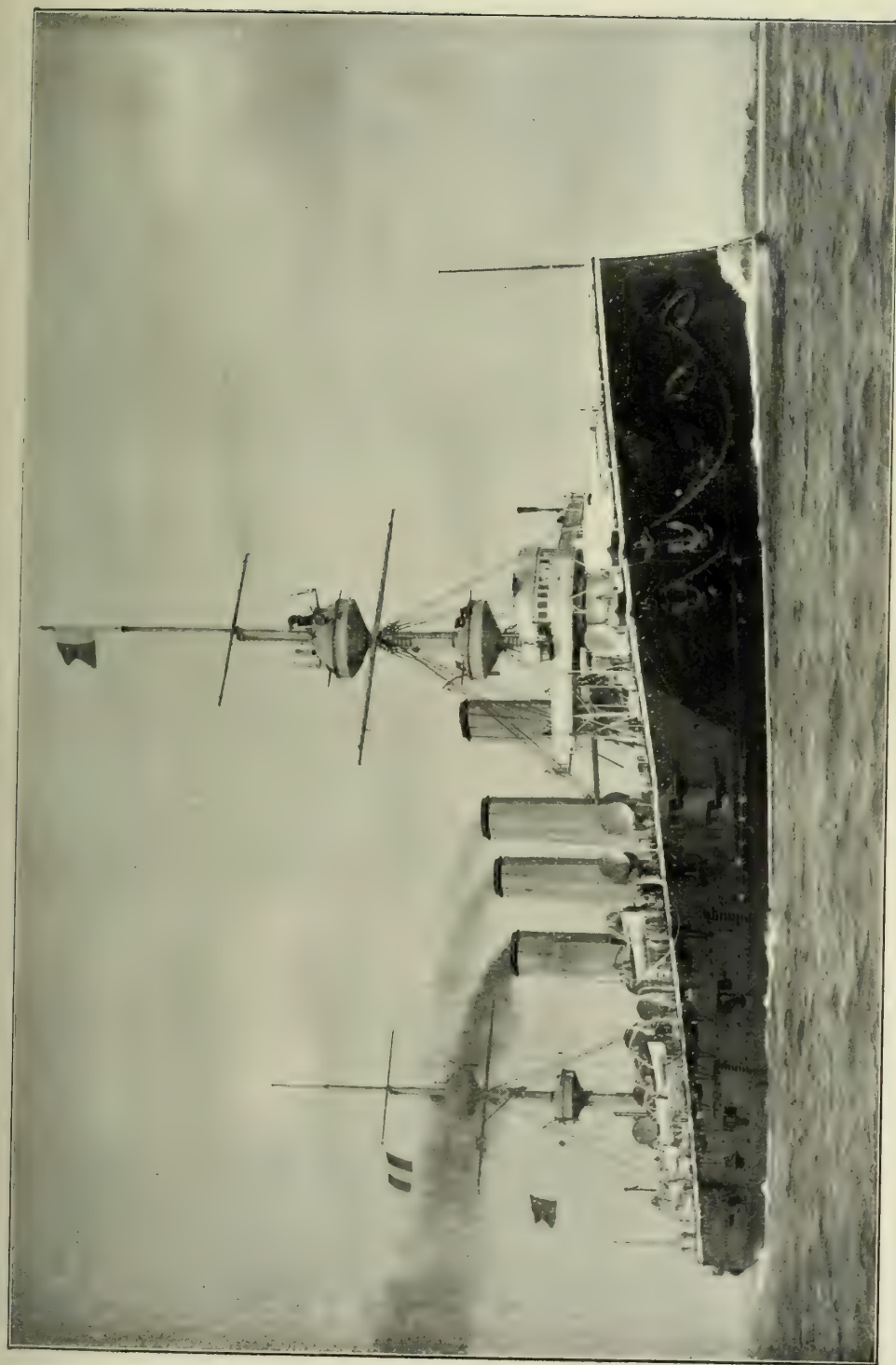
Curiously enough, while the beforesaid plan of attack was in course of being enacted, Lieutenant Mathias was visiting his posts. In the obscurity he all at once found himself confronted by Boers on every side. With amazing presence of mind he faced about, and seeing that the Dutchmen mistook him for one of themselves, acted as if he also were assaulting the hill. When near enough, however, he made a rush—a desperate rush—to warn the pickets of their danger. But he was too late. Two men were shot dead, whilst Lieutenant Mathias and a third trooper were wounded. There was no help at hand, and before assistance could be summoned, the enemy were already sweeping the hill. But the sound of the first shots had given the alarm.

Instantly all was flurry and confusion. Men that a moment before had been sleepily yawning after their heavy labours were racing hither and thither, groping in the darkness in search of arms. Others however, who were armed, forebore to fire, the felt hats of the foe being mistaken for those of the Imperial Light Horsemen. With a desperate effort Lieutenant Digby Jones gathered together his sappers. Hurried shots were fired, hurried orders given, but nothing could efface the effects of the sudden surprise. The Boers had gained the hill and driven the defenders over the crest! This all in a darkness that might have been felt. Such lanterns as there were had been overturned and extinguished in the hustle of the stampeding Kaffirs, who had been assisting at the arrangement of the gun, and who, at the first approach of the enemy, had fled. Forks and flashes of flame shining from the nek between the twin hills showed that the second column of the Dutch commando also was attaining its object. The gun, which fortunately had not yet been erected on the top of the hill, was instantly got to work under the direction of Lieutenant Parker; rifles were seized, and an effort was made in the obscurity to sweep the hill in the direction where the enemy was supposed to be. But the Boers were completely enveloped in the darkness of the night, and it was impossible to locate them; and the Hotchkiss gun was drawn back within the sandguard which had hurriedly been thrown up, only just in time. The Boers were now almost upon it. All the available men about Wagon Hill had instantly rushed to the rescue, and the Imperial Light Horse, some King's Royal Rifles, and a few Gordon Highlanders were soon in the thick of the fray. The Highlanders, taking their place round the crest, fired, as hard as rifles would let them, down the slope. Some fierce fighting followed. Before the Boers could get farther up, the Imperial Light Horse with their wonted gallantry engaged them, and sent the invaders helter-skelter

The Transvaal War

down hill into the mysterious mists of the dawn. But this was but for a moment—it was merely the commencement of affairs.

The whole garrison got under arms, not only the military, but every available man taking up some weapon to assist in withstanding the onslaught. It was felt to be a desperate situation, desperate for both sides, for the enemy knew that something must be done, and that quickly, to prevent the pending arrival of relief by Sir Redvers Buller, while the garrison, in face of reduced rations, disease, dysentery, and decreasing ammunition, was aware that it was a case of now or never. The alarm once given, Colonel Hamilton from the west had sent for reinforcements with amazing rapidity, and up came two and a half companies of Gordon Highlanders from the base of Cæsar's Camp, while one company under Captain the Hon. R. T. Carnegie started to support the Manchester pickets on Cæsar's Camp, and a company and a half went to Wagon Hill. It was while the Gordons were marching up and crossing the bridge of the Klip River that they met with their first mishap. Colonel Dick Cunyngham, only just recovered from his wound at Elandslaagte, was struck by a chance bullet and fell mortally wounded. Major Scott then took the command. Presently came the Rifle Brigade and half a battalion of the first 60th to the rescue, while the 21st Field Battery hurried to cover the western approaches to Wagon Hill, and the 53rd Battery took up a position to guard the most southern point of Cæsar's Camp. But all this movement was not accomplished till much carnage had been wrought. As already mentioned, the Boers had nearly achieved their object and cut off Wagon Hill West from Wagon Hill proper. By dawn they were straggling on the plateau connecting the two hills, merely checked in their further advance on Wagon Hill by the remnant of the Light Horse. Firing at this time was so terrific and at such close range that it was impossible to move from cover and live. Bullets literally buzzed like bees in the serene morning air. On one side were the Boers making for the second hill, on the other were the British struggling to ward them off. Meanwhile, trickling along through the Fournier's Spruit were arriving more desperate farmers, more picked men of skilled marksmanship and deadly purpose. At this time reinforcements also arrived for the brave little band who were so gallantly resisting the Dutchmen. But even the additional numbers were insufficient, it was impossible to cope with the marvellous marksmanship of the advancing horde. They came ever nearer and nearer, firing thick and fast—and with explosive bullets. The Colonel, two Majors, and four other officers of the Light Horse dropped—the enemy seized the position—and from thence it was impossible to dislodge them! To do this it would have been necessary to rush through some sixty yards of what seemed hell-fire—a perfect ava-



H.M.S. "POWERFUL."

Photo by Symonds, Portsmouth.

The Attack on Wagon Hill

lanche of death. Major Mackworth made the dashing effort, but in the very act he was stricken down, and most of the gallant fellows of the 60th Rifles who accompanied him. Another officer, Lieutenant Tod, pluckily attempted the same hazardous exploit. Twelve noble fellows followed him. Six were hit, and the valiant young leader dropped dead before he had moved three yards from cover. Colonel Codrington (11th Hussars), who was commanding a squadron of the Imperial Light Horse, made a rush forward to ascertain if it were possible to get cover for his men, but before he had gone thirty yards, he too shared the fate of the other officers. These experiences were sufficient. It was decided that the best plan would be to wait under cover till dusk, when the bayonet might be made to supersede the rifle.

While all this was taking place on Wagon Hill, a terrific drama was being enacted at Cæsar's Camp; and exciting assaults, defeats, and re-assaults were following each other on Wagon Hill West. Soon after dawn, the 52nd Field Battery, under Major Abdy, commenced to shell the slopes below Cæsar's Camp, and keep the enemy from ascending in that direction. The operation was one fraught with extreme difficulty, as the shells were forced to travel over the heads of our own men in order to effect a lodgment at the desired spot. But the work of the gunners was admirable, and the shells burst with a precision that wrought awful destruction on the enemy. The whole of the eastern slopes of the hill were covered with dead Dutchmen lying amidst fragments of steel and iron in the blood-clotted grass. The scene around Ladysmith at this time was appalling. Away in the direction of Wagon Hill, fiercely every inch of ground was being contested, and here the Naval guns and artillery were bellowing and roaring and sending their deadly messages all along the ridge of Cæsar's Camp, driving off the enemy, who came back again and again. There was a hard tussle, particularly for the Gordons and the Rifle Brigade. Their lives hung by a thread. The Boers were inflamed with either hope or desperation, and, contrary to custom, advanced to death and destruction with dogged and, one may say, admirable pluck. Day broke and grew to its zenith, and still the fighting raged; still the guns roared and snorted; still the dust and dirt flew to the skies, coming down again to stop the mouths of gasping, dying men, and blind the eyes of those who, bloodstained and sweltering, were yet selling their lives at the dearest price that could be asked.

Just as the fire was slackening, possibly from sheer fatigue on both sides, the heavily charged thunder-clouds burst over the position, and a terrific downpour of hail and rain scourged the contesting forces and flooded the trenches. The Boers at this time had been driven to a corner like wolves at bay, and could not emerge without

The Transvaal War

running the gantlet of a tremendous fire from the Ladysmith guns. Wet to the skin, the ground one vast meadow of slush, the combatants still held on with grim tenacity, each side watching lynx-eyed, each being now almost mad with an insatiable and ferocious desire for victory.

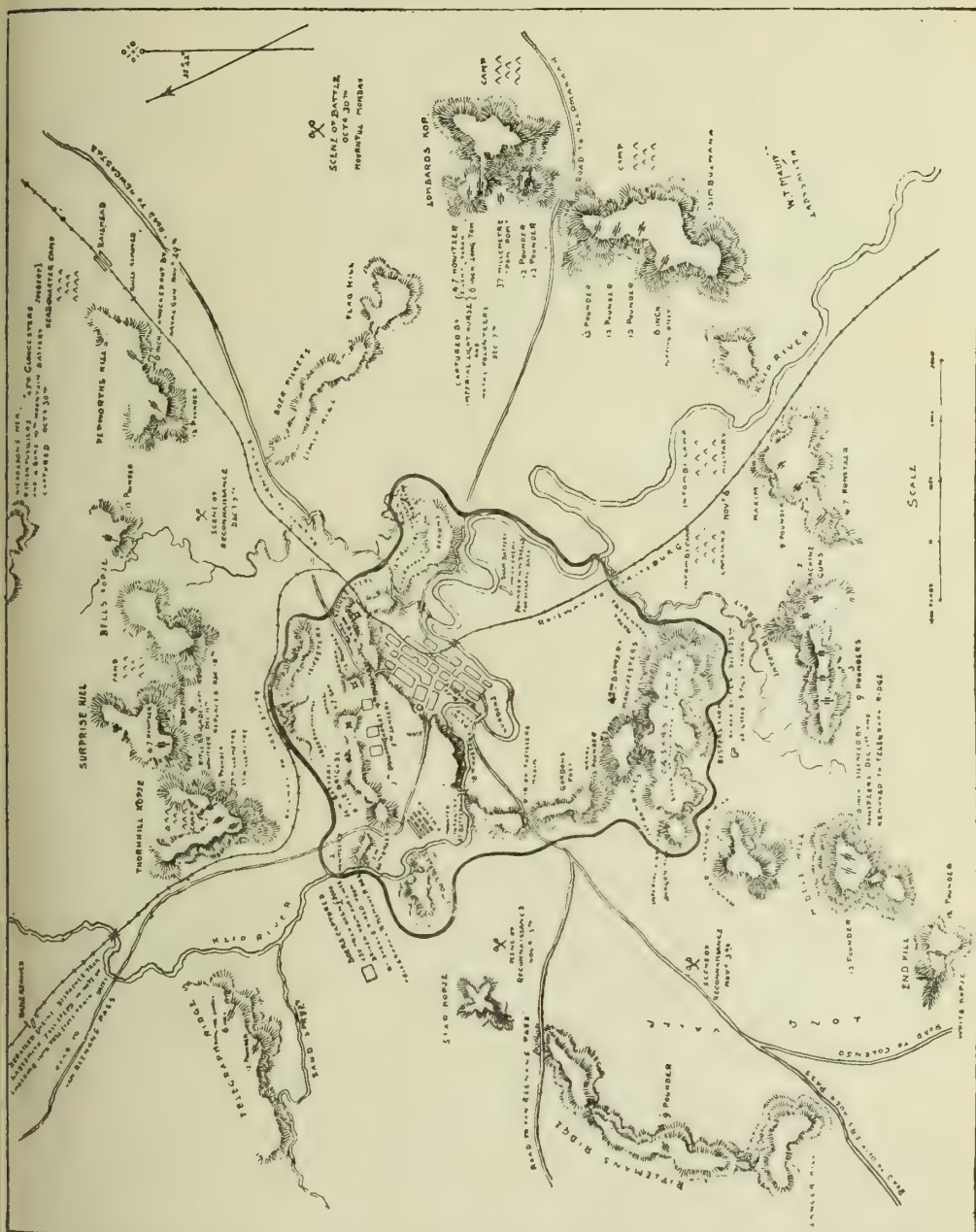
The storm continued and grew. Instead, as imagined, of relinquishing the fight, the Boers took courage from the tempest. The tornado from heaven only served to increase the tornado below! It seemed to suit the stormy state of human passions, to stimulate rather than subdue. Under cover of the thunder and the swirl of the elements the Federals made one desperate onward rush, but the furious fire which met them from Volunteers and British Infantry hurled them back and sent them spinning in heaps or rushing with howls down the hill. The 53rd Battery swept the bush country with a storm of shrapnel, and away to cover they went, and with them their reinforcements, who had been hiding in the neighbouring nullahs, waiting for the great, the final hour of triumph.

So much for Cæsar's Camp. On Wagon Hill before noon the Devons, with their gallant commander, had come to the forefront, Colonel Park again leading them to renewed success. As we know, the Boers were already on the hill, and the Gordons, who had lost their officers, were falling back when Major Milner Wallnutt rallied them. The enemy were soon removed from the emplacement which they held; but they rushed towards the west, and were there as dangerously fixed as ever. About two o'clock the most horrible moment of the fight arrived. The hill that had been the subject of such eager contest was again attacked, this time by a small but desperate body of Dutchmen. De Villiers, their Commandant, made a wild forward rush to secure the position. In an instant Major Wallnutt and a sapper were shot dead, but the rest of the sappers magnificently fronted the invaders with fixed bayonets. Presently the brilliant youth, the hero of the Surprise Hill affair, Lieutenant Digby Jones, R.E., led them forward, shot De Villiers, and dropped! A bullet had sent him home to his last account. The hoary-headed Burghers were stayed in their onward march by the splendid action of the noble boy, who so many times had risked his young life in the service of his country. At this juncture up came a dismounted squadron of the 18th Hussars, and the situation was saved. The plateau was reoccupied.

But even then all was not over. The great, the supreme effort to recapture Wagon Hill came at four o'clock in the afternoon. The lightning flashed, the thunder rolled, the hail clattered and splashed, the guns blazed, vomited, and growled, and the silky whistle of bullets made a flute-like treble to the awful orchestra of sound. In the midst of the uproar the Boers again obstinately

The Attack on Wagon Hill

advanced up the heights, firing deliberately as they came. On their heads poured the wrath of the British guns, and among their



PLAN OF LADYSMITH AND CHRONICLE OF EVENTS. (From Drawing by W. T. Maud.)

numbers rained the ceaseless bullets of the Infantry ; but they steadily moved up, doggedly determined once more to reach the crest of the hill. They came nearer and ever nearer till, on a sudden, they

The Transvaal War

flung themselves upon the Devons, who, cheering wildly, rushed into their midst and dispersed them. One short moment—one wild, valiant rush, and then—then the trusty British bayonets dripped with gore, and the Boers—all that were left of them, a racing, disorganised rabble—surged madly down the hill!

The worst was over; the British conquerors rushed after the retreating foe. The Devons, led by their intrepid commander, charged down the slope, and this time, with a wild exultant yell—which echoed like a tocsin among the caves and the boulders and the honey-combed banks of the river—effectually drove the fleeing herd from the scene of carnage.

The lost ground was recovered, but the lost lives. . . . Yes; they, too, live in the glorious annals of British history.

Captain Lafone, Lieutenants Field and Walker were among the slain; and Lieutenant Masterton was wounded. The splendid charge cost the Devons all the company officers—fifteen killed and forty wounded!

It was a dreadful seventeen hours' work. Not a soul but had his duty, and more than his duty, cut out for him. The jolly Jack Tars stood to their guns from morn till night, blazing away with marvellous accuracy and precision, while the gallant Natal Police, Natal Carabineers, and Mounted Rifles were wedged between the Boers from Mount Bulwana and the rest of their attacking party, and signally defeated all their efforts to effect a junction. The Manchester Regiment, the Border Regiment, a detachment of Mounted Rifles, the Gordon Highlanders, and the Rifle Brigade defended the east of Cæsar's Camp like heroes, while on the west, as we know, the Imperial Light Horse, more Gordon Highlanders, the Devon Regiment, the King's Royal Rifles, and a Naval detachment did glorious deeds. The Naval Brigade and the Natal Naval Volunteers occupied a central position, while three batteries of the Field Artillery were perched on a hill, and one remained on the ground below. All these were called upon to act with might and main to avert the pending calamity, to meet the stubborn, mulish persistency of the Boers with its match in British bulldog obstinacy, and show the enemy that with all the odds against them the besieged would never surrender. Valiantly—almost miraculously—they held their own. They who for months had been exposed to privation of all kinds, who had fought engagement after engagement, who had eaten, drunk, and slept with the shadow of death hanging over them, knowing that at any moment the caprice of fate might make them victims to the incoming shells or threatened disease, came out with enfeebled frames, but wills of iron, determined to conquer or to die.

Elsewhere there had also been bloody doings. The enemy had even tried to force their way into the town, and from here they were



THE GREAT ASSAULT ON LADYSMITH—THE DEVONS CLEARING WAGON HILL.

Drawing by W. T. Maud.

The Attack on Wagon Hill

chased by the gallantry and daring of the Gloucester, Leicester, and Liverpool Regiments. The Boers were forced to retire, but even in their retirement they showed characteristic "slimness," as they made their way in line with the neutral camp at Intombi Spruit, and thus defied the British to fire upon them. Nor was this the only example of their ingenious mode of self-defence on that day. Their "slimness" was carried on on every available opportunity. For instance, a party of the enemy, under cover of darkness of the early morning, had got almost within touch of Lieutenant Royston, who at once called on the Border Mounted Rifles to fire. They were in the act of doing so when a voice rang out, "Don't shoot. We are the Town Guard." No sooner, however, had the order to "Cease fire" been heard than crack, crack, ping, ping, a volley was at once poured on the Colonials. Several of their number dropped, but the rest, exasperated beyond endurance at the hateful duplicity, charged into the midst of the enemy, leaving scarce one of them to tell the tale.

These tricks and dodges set aside, the Boers fought more pluckily than was their wont, and they, cheered on by their dauntless Commandant, De Villiers, came to such close quarters that Colonel Hamilton had recourse to his revolver. Among the first of the gallant defenders to drop was the glorious, heroic figure of Colonel Dick-Cunyngham.¹ He was seen standing on the road-bridge in the act of leading his men, and was struck by some sharp-shooting Boer. By seven o'clock in the morning numbers of other splendid fellows had fallen, and the air of Ladysmith was rent with the cries and groans of the dying, who thickly strewed the ground.

Lieutenant-Colonel William Henry Dick-Cunyngham, V.C., of the Gordon Highlanders, entered the army in 1872, and first saw service in the Afghan War of 1878-80, and won his Victoria Cross in that campaign. He was present on transport duty in the advance to Candahar and Khelat-Ghilzie under Sir Donald Stewart; with the Thull Chotali Force under Major-General Biddulph; under Sir Frederick Roberts in the Koorum Valley Field Force in the 92nd Gordon Highlanders, including the engagement at Ali Kheyl; and he took part in the operations round Cabul in December 1879, including the attack on the Sherpur Pass. He was with the Maidan Expedition in 1880 as acting adjutant of a wing of the 92nd Gordon Highlanders, including the engagement at Charasiah on April 25; accompanied Sir Frederick Roberts in the famous march to Candahar, and was present at the reconnaissance of the 31st of August, and at the Battle of Candahar. He was awarded the V.C. "for the conspicuous gallantry and coolness displayed by him on the 13th of December 1879 at the attack on the Sherpur Pass, in Afghanistan, in having exposed himself to the terrible fire of the enemy, and by his example and encouragement rallied the men who, having been beaten back, were at the moment wavering at the top of the hill." He served in the Boer War of 1881 as Adjutant of the 92nd Gordon Highlanders, and was subsequently D.A.A.G. at Bengal. He went out in the autumn of 1899 to Natal in command of the 2nd Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders, and led them into action at the battle of Elandslaagte. He fell early in the charge, wounded by a bullet in the leg. While lying on the ground he called to his men to go on and leave him, and then calmly took out and lit his pipe, waiting for hours before being removed by the ambulance party. At the end of the year Sir George White reported that Colonel Dick-Cunyngham had completely recovered. He returned to active duty only to be again wounded—this time mortally. He was uncle to Sir William Dick-Cunyngham, the present baronet, and fifth son of the eighth baronet. Born in 1851, he married in 1883 Helen, daughter of Mr. Samuel Wauchope, C.B.

The Transvaal War

Lord Ava, orderly officer to Colonel Hamilton, fell mortally injured,¹ and Colonel Edwards's wound was also severe.

Lieutenant Digby Jones (Royal Engineers) took a most heroic part, alas! with tragic results. With his own hands he shot three of the enemy, and clubbed a fourth, but for his gallant conduct, which doubtless would have been rewarded with a V.C., he paid later on in the day with his life. One gallant young trooper of the Imperial Light Horse had strange experiences. He, with only a sergeant, was among the first to meet the Boers. In the dusk of dawn the sergeant fell, and the trooper was wounded. He recovered his senses sufficiently to try and creep to cover. A shower of rain drenched him, then the sun blazed out mercilessly and scorched him. Worn out, he decided he would stagger to the Devons and get support, but, battered as he was, they failed to recognise him, and arrested him as a spy!

Numerous deeds of amazing valour were performed, so many indeed that they deserve a separate record without the limits of the narrative. But the story of the heroic Bozeley cannot be omitted. During the action there was a sergeant in command of one of the guns sitting rather doubled up on the trail of his gun. A 4.7 shell took off his leg high up on one side, and took the arm out of the socket, and he fell across the trail of the gun, as they thought, an inanimate, speechless mass. But to the astonishment of every man amongst them, a voice came from the mass inciting them on to their duty, and saying: "Here, you men, roll me out of the way, and go on working the gun."

The list of casualties was a grievously long one:—

Killed:—5th Lancers—Second Lieutenant W. H. T. Hill. 23rd Corps Royal Engineers—Lieutenant R. J. T. Digby Jones, Second Lieutenant G. B. B. Dennis. 1st Devonshire Regiment—Captain W. B. Lafone, Lieutenant H. N. Field, Lieutenant C. E. M. Walker, 1st Somerset Light Infantry (attached). Imperial Light Horse—Lieutenant William F. Adams, Lieutenant John Edward Pakeman. 1st King's Royal Rifle Corps—Brevet-Major F. Mackworth, 2nd Royal West Surrey Regiment (attached). 2nd King's Royal Rifle Corps—Major R. S. Downen, Lieutenant M. M. Tod, 1st Cameronians (attached), Second Lieutenant F. H. Raikes, 2nd Gordon Highlanders—Major C. C. Miller Wallnutt. 2nd Rifle Brigade—Second Lieutenant L. D. Hall. *Wounded*:—Staff—Captain Earl of Ava dangerously (died January 11). Intelligence Department—Local Captain H. Lees-Smith, slightly. 5th Lancers—Captain E. O. Wathen, slightly. Imperial Light Horse—Lieutenant-Colonel A. H. M. Edwards, 5th Dragoon Guards (attached), slightly, Major W. Karri Davis, slightly, Major D. E. Doveton, dangerously (died February 14), Lieutenant W. R. Codrington, 11th Hussars (attached), dangerously, Lieutenant J. Richardson, 11th Hussars (attached), severely, Lieutenant Douglas

¹ Archibald James Leofric Temple Blackwood, born in 1863, was educated at Eton. He was a member of Methuen's Horse in Sir Charles Warren's Bechuanaland Expedition. Then he served with the Carabineers, and afterwards obtained a lieutenancy in the 17th Lancers. He accompanied the Natal Force, in an unattached capacity, on the outbreak of hostilities.

The Attack on Wagon Hill

Campbell, dangerously, Lieutenant P. H. Normand, slightly. 1st Devonshire Regiment—Lieutenant J. Masterson, severely. 1st Manchester Regiment—Major A. E. Simpson, slightly, Captain A. W. Marden, slightly, Captain T. Menzies, slightly, Second Lieutenant E. N. Fisher, severely. 1st King's Royal Rifle Corps—Lieutenant R. McLachlan, severely. 2nd Gordon Highlanders—Lieutenant-Colonel W. Dick-Cunyngham, severely (died January 7), Captain Hon. R. Carnegie, severely, Lieutenant W. Macgregor, severely. 2nd Rifle Brigade—Brevet Major G. Thesiger, severely, Captain S. Mills, dangerously (died February 2), Captain R. Stephens, severely, Captain H. Biddulph, slightly, Second Lieutenant C. E. Harrison, slightly. 5th Lancashire Fusiliers—Lieutenant F. Barker, attached Army Service Corps. Natal Mounted Rifles—Captain A. Wales, slightly, Lieutenant H. W. Richardson, slightly. Volunteer Medical Staff, Lieutenant R. W. Hornebrook, slightly. Royal Army Medical Corps—Major C. G. Woods, slightly.

On the following day—Sunday—in the Anglican Church, a thanksgiving service for victory was held, and all who were able attended the solemn function. At the close of the simple yet impressive service General White and his staff stood at the altar rails while the *Te Deum* was performed, and this was afterwards followed by the singing in thrilling unison of the National Anthem. Round the Chief were the men who have fought by his side through many days of sore trouble—each hour an eternity in its experiences. The well-known forms of General Sir Archibald Hunter and General Ian Hamilton were in evidence, but some, alas! of that goodly company would never be seen again. In the Town Hall close by, and in the adjacent hotels and dwellings, honest manly souls were breathing their last, and others had already taken their flight to where the great thanksgiving service of creation goes on for ever and ever.

Among these last was a man who was the pride of his sex and an ornament to his profession, Colonel Dick-Cunyngham, V.C. Wounded previously, from his second blow he never rallied, and on this sad Sunday passed away.

In a few words the *Daily Telegraph* summed up the surprising qualities of the heroic figure that had so lamentably passed from society as from the scene of war: "Lieutenant-Colonel Dick-Cunyngham was the beau-ideal of a Highland officer, and there was not a man or woman in the world who had a bad word to say about him. His heart was as true as steel, and his manner was courtesy itself. In his kilt and bonnet, a moustache that was so light that it was nearly white telling against the bronze of his face, and with a mountaineer's figure, he was a man who caught every artist's eye at once, and he has figured, without his knowledge, again and again in pictures and illustrations. At Shirpur he first gave proof of his great gallantry by rallying the men when for a moment they wavered; at Majuba he was the officer who asked permission to charge. Elands-laagte and Ladysmith are the last two names in his long record of heroism."

CHAPTER VI

BULLER'S SECOND ADVANCE

AT last, after a long period of suspense, it was possible for General Buller's force to make an appreciable advance. The arrangements were set on foot with the utmost secrecy, and on the 9th of January the second forward movement of the troops from Frere and Chieveley may be said to have commenced. General Barton and the Fusilier Brigade were deputed to watch over Colenso, and with them were left some dummy cannon, cunningly contrived by Jack Tar so as not to forewarn the Boers, and allow them to congratulate themselves on the absence of lyddite from their vicinity. This was not the first time that guns in effigy had been arranged to do duty in our dealings with the Boers. During one of the sieges in the year 1881, a "Quaker" cannon was erected in an inviting position on purpose to draw the Boers' fire, with the result that they expended the best part of a day and a vast amount of valuable ammunition on the imperturbable object!

To appreciate the gigantic nature of the advance now made, we may refer to a rough table showing the composition and strength of the forces in Natal at this date under the command of Sir Redvers Buller.

SIR REDVERS BULLER'S FORCE

SECOND DIVISION.—(Lieutenant-General Sir C. F. Clery).—2nd (Hildyard's) Brigade—2nd East Surrey; 2nd West Yorks; 2nd Devons; 2nd West Surrey. 4th (Lyttelton's) Brigade—1st Rifle Brigade (included in Sir C. Warren's Division); 1st Durham Light Infantry; 3rd King's Royal Rifles; 2nd Scottish Rifles (Cameronians); Squadron 14th Hussars; 7th, 14th, and 66th Field Batteries, less 11 guns of 14th and 66th Batteries lost at Colenso.

THIRD DIVISION.—5th (Hart's) Brigade—1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers; 1st Connaught Rangers; 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers; 1st Border. 6th (Barton's) Brigade—2nd Royal Fusiliers; 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers; 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers; 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers; Squadron 14th Hussars; 63rd, 64th, and 73rd Field Batteries.

FIFTH DIVISION.—(Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Warren).—10th (Coke's) Brigade—2nd Dorset; 2nd Middlesex. 11th (Woodgate's) Brigade—2nd Royal Lancaster; 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers; 1st South Lancashire; 1st York and Lancaster; Squadron 6th Dragoons; 19th, 20th, and 28th Field Batteries. Brigades uncertain—2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers; 2nd Somerset Light Infantry. Corps Troops—61st Field Battery (Howitzers); Natal Battery 9-pounders; Six Naval 12-pounder quick-firers; 4th Mountain Battery; 4.7 Naval guns. Cavalry Brigade—1st Royal Dragoons; 13th Hussars. South



PIETERMARITZBURG FROM THE EAST.

Photo by Wilson, Aberdeen.

Sir Redvers Buller's Force

African Colonial Troops—500 Bethune's Mounted Infantry; Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry; Natal Carabineers; South African Light Horse (seven squadrons); Imperial Light Horse (squadron); Imperial Light Infantry; Natal Police.

This table suggests a very imposing army, but it is necessary to remember that only a part of any force assembled at the base is available for actual attack. The lines of communication to Chieveley alone were some 160 miles in length, and the necessary work of guarding them, securing easy transport and supply, Royal Engineer work, and other business connected with the munition of war, independent of sickness, absorbed a large proportion of the troops. Military experts estimated that the absolute fighting men were far fewer than supposed. The table here shown represents some 30,000 men, but of these about 5000 were engaged in miscellaneous work. Out of twenty-three battalions of infantry it was necessary to use three or even more for the guarding of the lines of communication. Of three regiments of cavalry, only a part was available, while of the other arms, allowance had to be made for the loss that had been sustained, and also for sickness. In this march, now that the army had at last moved from the railway, the baggage column was enormous. It made a procession of some miles in length as it lumbered along primitive roads, through mud sometimes ankle-deep. It had been decided to bring up all tents, sheep, coops, &c., and consequently the various fatigue duties involved in the move were enormous.

When one considers the ordinary transport of a mere regiment, it is possible to form some idea of the amazing cortège that had to follow the movements of the commander. The transport of a regiment in South Africa, roughly speaking, was composed of six ox-waggons, each drawn by sixteen oxen in pairs tandem fashion (managed by Kaffir boys, one driving the wheelers, another spurring the whole caravan by means of an enormous whip and a profuse vocabulary); four ammunition carts, each drawn by six mules; a water-cart, with pair of mules; a "Scotch" cart, and a strong luggage-cart, drawn by four mules, for conveyance of tents, blankets, and food, &c. A little mental multiplication will help us to picture the long serpentine coil that was twisting its way from Colenso to the new westerly point of attack.

The procession was forced to move slowly and cautiously through a rugged, mountainous district, from which no supplies of any sort could be drawn. The ox-wagon of the country had to be relied upon entirely for heavy transport. This mode of conveyance is somewhat characteristic of the progress of the tortoise; two miles an hour was the average rate of advance, and at most the shambling cattle succeeded in covering about twelve to fifteen miles a day. Of

The Transvaal War

proper roads there were none. The country was a vast swamp after heavy rain, or, in fine weather, a mass of dry ruts and tracks, steep hills, difficult fords, and irritating boulders. Over all this had to be coaxed or goaded the patient oxen, or, still worse, the stubborn, obstinate mules which dragged the lighter carts, and which, like ignorant persons, sometimes jibbed for sheer jibbing's sake, true to the obstructionist instinct that belongs to the intellectually stolid. When a team of these strong yet strange beasts chooses to jib at a ford or in a pass, it takes some companies of infantry to haul the waggon on to level ground, and then, and only then, will they condescend to resume their labour. It may therefore be imagined that the progress of troops—dependent as they were for food and forage on the tempers of quadrupeds—was at this time slow and not always sure! However, troops and baggage were gradually concentrated at Springfield, while the Boers, who had spies everywhere, among boulders, in dongas, and upon the formidable height of Spion Kop, hurried about their preparations for the renewed and mighty tussle which was now pending.

On the 10th of January Lord Dundonald, at the head of the Cavalry Brigade, started at dawn from Frere Camp. A few miles outside they came on targets erected by the Boers to represent a force advancing in skirmishing order, which showed that the enemy had evidently been indulging in rifle practice. The troops marched some twenty-four miles in a north-westerly direction to Springfield, through the country, which was one vast quagmire beset with the enemy, without mishap of any kind. There were thrilling moments when the enemy were known to be ensconced in neighbouring kopjes or hiding in the bush, but every precaution was taken, the country having been previously searched by scouts, and the whole movement so successfully carried out that the brigade at last was able to occupy a strong position dominating Potgieter's Drift on the Upper Tugela. Here at once extra defences were made, to ensure against surprise from the enemy, who, finding the rivers in flood, had retired to the north, and to enable Lord Dundonald's force to hold its ground, and thus render safe the passage of the river.

Lord Dundonald's Brigade was accompanied by the Fifth Brigade under General Hart, comprising the Dublin Fusiliers, the Connaught Rangers, the Border Regiment, and the Inniskilling Fusiliers. These, on hearing that Springfield was unoccupied by the enemy, now took possession of the place.

The column then advanced to Mount Alice, one of the spurs of Swartz Kop or Black Hill, a rocky eminence which faced the mountain fastnesses of the foe. From this point the panorama was magnificent. In front the Tugela looped and twisted in four big silvery bends, and great kopjes, the scenes of future fights, rose on

Sir Redvers Buller's Force

the other side. It was possible to see the flat crowned summit of Spion Hill, which was held by the Boers and covered with trenches, and another frowning eminence also held by the enemy. A glimpse, too, might be had of the distant laager of the Boers perched on the Tugela heights; but the Dutchmen being evidently warned of the coming of the British troops, struck camp and silently melted away. Still it was known that there were some of them within almost a stone's throw, for on the arrival of Lord Dundonald's force at Potgieter's Drift it was discovered they had been there the previous day.

The next morning, the 11th, the pontoon from the enemy's side of the river was very cleverly captured, it may be said in the very teeth of the foe, by Lieutenant Carlyle and six of his men of the South African Horse. They leapt into the stream, which at that place was running strong, swam to the Boer side, untied the pont, and succeeded in getting it across for the use of the troops. The achievement was a brilliant one, because during the whole proceedings the exact position of the Boers was unknown. At any moment a volley might have been poured on the adventurous party from which it would have been almost impossible to escape. No sooner had they removed the fastenings of the pont and were getting it across than shots were fired, one of them grazing Lieutenant Carlyle, who, however, pursued his work to the end.

From the heights we had gained, operations were soon commenced both with heliograph and telescope. Mount Bulwana and part of the outskirts of Ladysmith were clearly visible. Fringed around them were Boer camps, waggon, and cattle; while studded over the ground the enemy was seen, some building forts, others digging trenches, and all working like bees to protect the road from our advance. The Ladysmith chief signaller, Captain Walker, rapidly came into communication with the signallers on Swartz Kop, and Sir George White was informed of the satisfactory progress of the advance so far.

The Naval guns were now comfortably ensconced on the western ridge of the hill, ready to do duty in sweeping away the strong positions which were being rapidly built up by the hostile hordes, who were fast beginning to congregate from the neighbourhood of Colenso.

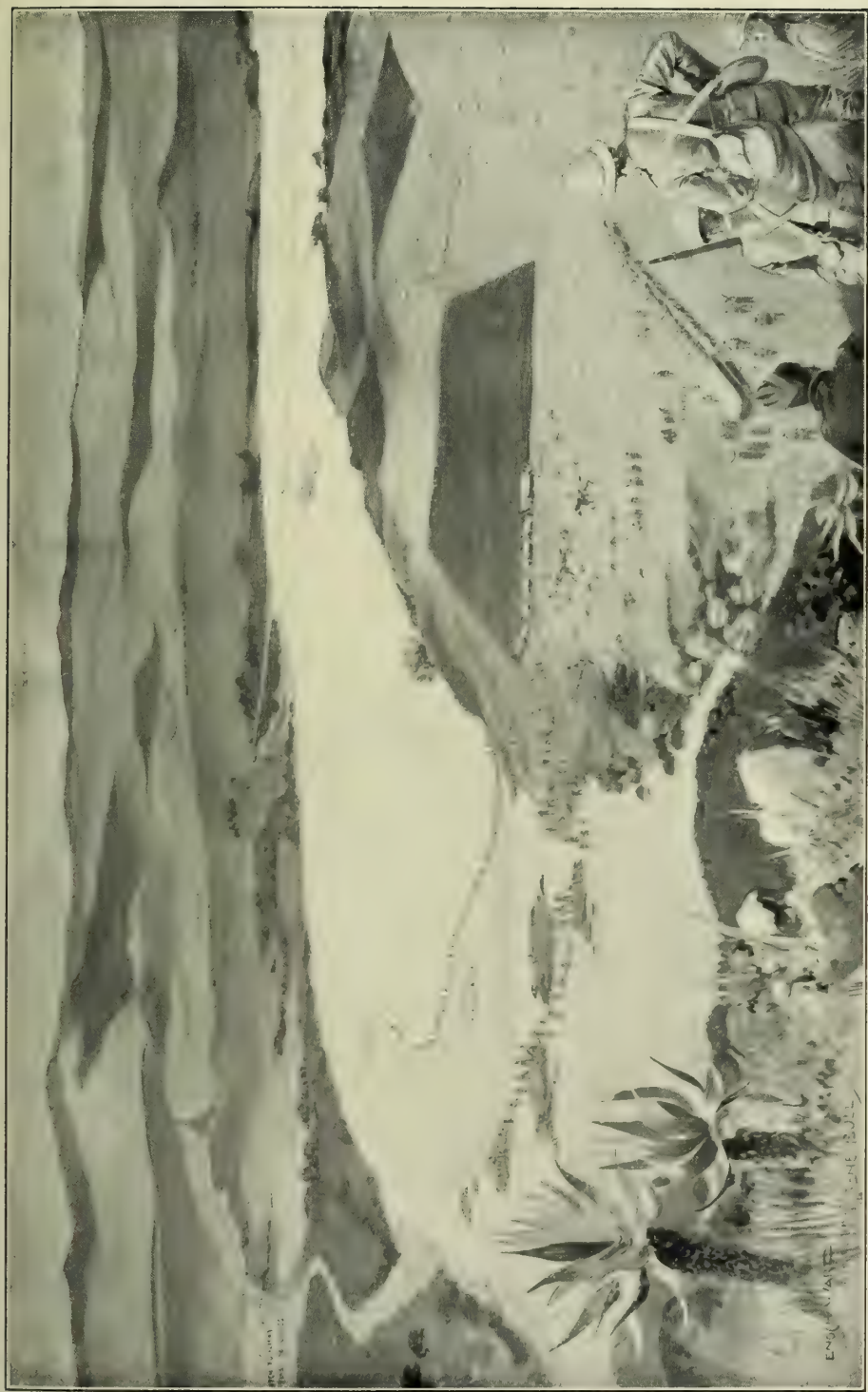
Meanwhile General Lyttelton's brigade had streamed in with howitzers, and soon these, under cover of the guns of the Naval Brigade, were across the river, and safely located on the other side. At the same time was commenced the fortifying of Mount Alice. The men were all in great fettle, working like Trojans, and perfectly regardless of fatigue. They crossed the scudding river, steadying themselves by holding each other's rifles, in a burning sun with the

The Transvaal War

water up to their waists, and advanced in skirmishing order over the boulder-strewn country, settling themselves at last on some low kopjes to the north of the river and facing the enemy's defences five miles north of the drift.

While these important events were taking place at Potgieter's Drift, General Sir Charles Warren with the 5th Division was also moving forward by a circuitous route. By another drift, called Trichardt's Drift, some five miles farther west, the entire force eventually got across and took up a position beyond the river, with the object of turning the position of the enemy, who were posted on Spion Kop. This journey was not achieved without coming in touch with the Boers. Some of them were hidden in a wooded nook by a farmhouse, and from thence poured rifle-shots on the advance guards. They even brought their cannon to bear on the troops; but the *passage d'armes* was of short duration, and the enemy, warmed with fervent salutations from the Naval guns on the hills, was soon in full flight across country. Then the engineers, with celerity which looked to the uninitiated like a conjuring trick, in two hours threw a pontoon bridge over the river, and the crossing was successfully accomplished. The great object of Sir Charles Warren was now, as stated, to turn the enemy's position. This, situated about five miles off to his right front, was undoubtedly a strong one. It ran laterally with the river, with Spion Kop for its centre, and all around the enemy were actively engaged in intrenching themselves. The plan of the combined movement was to make as hasty an attack as possible and prevent the Dutchmen from strengthening their position and reinforcing their right from their centre and left, and perhaps enable the Ladysmith garrison to do its share in threatening the enemy's rear. For this reason General Barton, with sufficient troops, had been left at Colenso to hold the Boers' forces and prevent them from massing on the line of Sir Redvers Buller's march. This latter officer with a small force directed the combined operations from Spearman's Farm, a little to the south of Mount Alice. The headquarters of himself and his staff were at the picturesque homestead of one Martinus Pretorius, a personage who thought it advisable not to remain to play the host.

The troops, in spite of their trying march—the mud collected by tremendous rains, the arduous business of getting across the river, the grilling sun overhead, and the enemy possibly threatening from unknown quarters—were bright, healthy, and hopeful. Immense enthusiasm was occasioned in every camp when all were made acquainted with the brief yet stirring words of Sir Redvers Buller: "*We are going to the relief of our comrades in Ladysmith; there will be no turning back.*" A short emphatic statement this—blunt as the conversation of the man who made it, but instinct with noble



THE CROSSING OF POTGEITER'S DRIFT, JANUARY 16.

Drawn by Enoch Ward from a Full Sketch by René Bull, War Artist with General Buller.

The Flank Movement

meaning—of superb resolve! It touched every heart, and made each bronzed-face warrior repeat once more to himself the oath to do or die for the honour of his country and for the service of those to be relieved!

THE FLANK MOVEMENT

Before going further, it is interesting to examine with the map a rough hint made by Mr. Winston Churchill, correspondent of the *Morning Post*, of the general plan of the advance.



TYPES OF ARMS—A MOUNTAIN BATTERY.

(Drawn by Ernest Prater.)

“Having placed his army within striking distance of the various passages across the Tugela, Sir Redvers Buller’s next object was to cross and debouch. To this end his plan appears to have been—for information is scarcely yet properly codified—something as follows : Lyttleton’s Brigade, the corps troops forming Coke’s Brigade, the ten Naval guns, the battery of howitzers, one field-battery, and Bethune’s Mounted Infantry to demonstrate in front of the Potgieter position, keeping the Boers holding the horseshoe in expectation of a frontal attack and masking their main position ; Sir Charles Warren to march by night from Springfield with the brigades of Hart, Woodgate, and Hildyard, the Royal Dragoons, six batteries of artillery, and the pontoon train to a point about five

The Transvaal War

miles west of Spearman's Hill, and opposite Trichardt's Drift on the Tugela. Here he was to meet the mounted forces from Spearman's Hill, and with these troops he was next day, the 17th, to throw bridges, force the passage of the river, and operate at leisure and discretion against the right flank of the enemy's horseshoe before Potgieter's, resting on Spion Kop, a commanding mountain, ultimately joining hands with the frontal force from Spearman's Hill at a point on the Acton Homes Ladysmith road. To sum up briefly, seven battalions, twenty-two guns, and three hundred horse under Lyttleton to mask the Potgieter position; twelve battalions, thirty-six guns, and sixteen hundred horse to cross five miles to the westward, and make a turning movement against the enemy's right. The Boer covering army was to be swept back on Ladysmith by a powerful left arm, the pivoting shoulder of which was at Potgieter's, the elbow at Trichardt's Drift, and the enveloping hand—the cavalry under Lord Dundonald—stretching out towards Acton Homes."

This plan on the surface appeared fairly practicable if the action could be carried on with sufficient rapidity to prevent the enemy from gathering in his crowds, as he had gathered at Colenso. Here was the great—If. The art of war is at best a choice of difficulties, and at this time our Generals had an embarrassment of that choice. It says a great deal for their courage that they handled these difficulties one after another, and let go only when they thought they had been squeezed dry.

The British troops having done with the fatigue of the march, did not allow the grass to grow under their feet. No sooner had they crossed the river than they began to threaten some of the Boer lines of retreat to the Free State. The Naval Brigade also set to work with vigour, and they, together with the howitzers from Mount Alice, pounded the whole vicinity to the right impartially. The range having been ascertained to a nicety, with the assistance of the balloon, whose occupants directed the gunners, some effective shots were launched at the Boer entrenchments, and others which were rapidly in course of construction. From the balloon these were plainly visible, but their tenants, if tenants there were, vouchsafed no reply. Many mounted Boers were seen galloping from Colenso to their laagers in the shelter of the more northerly kopjes, while others were also discovered coming in the direction from Ladysmith, evidently with a view to reinforce the commandoes on Spion Kop. While the Naval Brigade was hammering in the direction of the Boer position, which was somewhat below the level of Mount Alice, General Lyttleton was moving north of the position for the purpose of making a demonstration towards Brakfontein, and Sir Charles Warren's force

The Flank Movement

was approaching two high kopjes overlooking a ravine behind Spion Hill. It was now the 18th of January. The cavalry started in advance of the rest of the force. The order of march being, first, the Composite Regiment (one squadron of Imperial Light Horse, sixty Rifles Mounted Infantry, one squadron Natal Carbineers), four squadrons South African Light Horse, Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, and behind these the Royals and 13th Hussars. But the Composite Regiment at midday was found to have moved still farther west, and soon from that region came an ominous crackling. Something deadly was afoot. It appeared that a party of Boers was caught trekking by the Acton Homes Road towards the Free State, and was in act of being cut off. Firing was fast and furious, and presently dead and dying Boers besprinkled the field that a few moments before had been green and gracious to the eye. A message was sent to the main body demanding reinforcements. Promptly Lord Dundonald with the rest of his troops came on the scene. Hostilities grew in animation—the situation was desperate. The Boers made a hard fight of it, clung tenaciously to their position, refusing, though surrounded, to surrender. Their fire rained furiously down on the Rifles as they advanced, so furiously that they were forced to seek the shelter of a desirable donga. The obstinate combat was on the point of renewal when up went a white flag. The old dodge, one to which now our troops had become so accustomed that they scarcely heeded it. Both sides continued to blaze away in uncertainty and mistrust till presently hands flew up, and this sincerest and distinct sign of surrender was accepted. Twenty-four burly Boers were then captured, while, round about, the wounded of the foe were assiduously succoured and tended by the very men who in the race for dear life had stricken them down. Twenty-four captured, ten killed, eight wounded—such was the result of a few hours' work on the enemy. Of our number, Captain Shore of the Imperial Light Horse was severely wounded, two soldiers of the Mounted Infantry were killed, and one trooper of the Imperial Light Horse was slightly injured.

A word must be said of the South African Light Horse or "Cockyoli Birds," as they were jocosely styled in deference to the plumes in their headgear. These had become the heroes of the hour owing to the splendid action formerly mentioned of Lieutenant Carlyle and his plucky companions, Sergeant Turner, Corporals Cox and Barkley, and Troopers Howell, Godden, and Collingwood. In addition to this plucky feat they were ceaseless in their activity, as we shall afterwards see.

Before this date the men of the squadron had been much commented on and universally praised. Their dash, their aptness, their marvellous intelligence had earned the admiration of all the regulars

The Transvaal War

who had been associated with them. They, in their neat kharki, looked as efficient a body of mounted infantry as any one could wish to come across. Among their numbers were Afrikanders of good birth, Canadians, Australians, gentlemen of means, sporting men, old soldiers, and the like. They were hard as nails and bronzed as their saddles, acute as weasels, and big-hearted and adventurous as any of Robin Hood's world-famed merry men. If they were rough they were ready, sniffing adventure in the air and rushing hot-foot to greet it, or stalking warily like old Shikari, saving no pains so that they eventually brought down their quarry.

The engagement was a grand feather in the cap of the cavalry, and an additional one in that of the "Cockyoli Birds."

On the morning of Saturday the 20th of January Sir Charles Warren advanced his whole force to the attack. The scheme had been thought out with immense care. There was an excellent general with a superb division of troops, and there was every chance of success. General Woodgate's and General Hart's brigades marched forward at 3 A.M. from their bivouac on the low ridges below Spion Kop, with a view to capturing a position called Three Tree Hill, so called because of three mimosa trees whose fragrance filled the air. The proceedings opened with an animated bombardment from all quarters, our guns in the neighbourhood of Potgieter's and Tritchardt's Drifts engaging the attention of the Boers. By this time the Dutchmen were powerfully intrenched, and were still hurrying and scurrying to protect the big mountain that stood between the British and the object of their desire—Ladysmith. Woodgate's Brigade had pushed forward in this direction. Later Hart's Brigade took up a position on the spur parallel to the left of the Lancashire Brigade, and, under cover of the field-guns, the troops, in the thick of a storm from rifles and artillery, fought their way almost inch by inch up the steeps held by the Boers. They finally succeeded in gaining some portions of the enemy's line of intrenchments. But this was not achieved without an exhibition of pluck and valiant obstinacy that was heroic.

The Irish Brigade, as usual, were in the thick of the fight, jovial yet determined, and holding their grip of every inch they gained notwithstanding shadows of threatened dissolution, the sights of death and sounds of horror that filled the air. Captain Hensley, a brave and gallant soul, was shot through the head, and several officers were smitten, but still their valorous commander, waving his sword, pressed on, and still his sturdy Irishmen, animated, encouraged, confident, pursued their upward way. They had debts to settle—some old scores to wipe out. They remembered their hideous disappointment of Colenso, their grievous experiences of Dundee, and also they remembered—a far grander remembrance!

The Flank Movement

—that the honour of the Emerald Isle rested on their shoulders, and that the quality of its loyalty stood proved by the quality of their famous deeds!

All around played the fierce fire of the enemy's guns, Creusot, Maxim, Nordenfeldt, and others. These were posted in commanding positions on a chain of hills to the west of Spion Hill, and from various points of vantage the Dutchmen were able to keep up a ceaseless clamour, and pour a rapid torrent of death and mutilation upon the advancing troops. These, by reason of the bad ground and the caution required in the manner of approach, could travel but slowly. The enemy, owing to the delay in our advance, had increased their forces most unexpectedly, and seemed, though scarcely to have existed a week ago, to be now ubiquitous! During the afternoon General Lyttleton's Brigade made a frontal attack on the Dutchmen's position between Schwartz Kop and Spion Kop, to divert their attention pending the movements of Sir Charles Warren. This movement, it was imagined, had been kept very "dark," but, in spite of the secrecy and caution, the agile foe had contrived again to concentrate a huge force to oppose his every turn. More artillery seemed continuously to be brought to the scene, and also some of the trophies captured in the ill-fated attack on Colenso. Our Naval guns bombarded the ridge all day, and the howitzers boomed and roared, but the whole place appeared to be bustling with Boers. On the extreme left Lord Dundonald engaged in more energetic demonstration, and the indefatigable South African Light Horse, under Colonel Byng, more than ever distinguished themselves. In the most gallant manner they captured Bastion Hill, a hill between the Dutch right and centre.

This hill in the hands of the Boers was a standing menace, as from thence they could direct a cross-fire at the infantry on the opposite spur of the big mountain. Major Childe, commanding F Squadron, South African Light Horse, decided that he, and not the Federals, must secure so important a vantage-point. Dismounting with his men, and leaving his horses in rear of the heights, he cautiously crept round through a mealie field and various dongas which gave him cover from the storm of shot directed from the curve of the hills. In spite of the pelting lead, he got to the base of the position in safety. Then, with half the squadron, he started laboriously to climb. It was tough work, the sugar-loaf eminence being steep and stony and the sun above blisteringly hot. Thus they sweated and toiled for a whole hour. Finally, the Boers were seen scampering from the top. They had detected the approach of men—bayonets were suspected—they discreetly bolted. Just then Trooper Tobin, who had grandly led the way up the precipitous height, had reached his goal. Here he stood in his delight and

The Transvaal War

triumph waving his helmet and shouting, and quite regardless of the fact that he made an excellent mark for Boer sharpshooters or their mercenaries. Up, too, rushed Major Childe with a dozen or so of his nimble men, into the midst of a tornado of shot and shell which had suddenly started from the Boer left and centre. Promptly every one went to earth. It was useless at the moment to attempt to return so withering a fire. Then came a shell — bursting and banging — and the gallant Major was caught on the head and killed. Several others were slain, among them Godden, who had been one of the gallant seven who distinguished themselves in the pont exploit. Shattered by the terrible fire of artillery, breathless from past exertions, the troops still hung on. Then our own artillery came to the rescue and kept the Boer gunners occupied. Meanwhile, reinforcements from Hildyard's Brigade were sent up to the help of the brave fellows who for twelve hours had been without rest or water, and on the following day, to the West Surreys, the cavalry, after a tremendous and fatiguing experience, handed over the charge of the hill which they had so magnificently gained. The losses during this complex series of engagements were many, but the sufferings due to hunger, heat, thirst, and fatigue were even greater than those due to actual wounds.

The Lancashire Fusiliers, Lancashire Regiment, and the Dublin Fusiliers lost most during the day. Their wounded numbered about 350 officers and men. These troops had a peculiarly trying time, as for three whole days previously they had remained on some captured hills, sun-baked and fired on promiscuously, while at night, when the temperature had run down with its customary rapidity, they had found themselves chilled to the bone, with no blankets or overcoats to cover them. They had about two hours' sleep on an average per night and very little to eat during the day. From 3 A.M. on the 20th the Lancashires had taken up a position screened behind a string of low kopjes, while the artillery on the right battered and pounded at the Boer earthworks in front and half-left and half-right. The troops had remained quiet and painfully inactive in the sweltering sun for many hours, stray bullets whistling round their ears, and, as one of the officers said, "causing great levity among the men." At 1.30 they had begun to advance. Immediately they showed their heads they were caught by a hailstorm of bullets, and seven men dropped. Rushing dauntlessly on, they made for the shelter of a ring of rocks some 150 yards in advance, remained for some ten minutes or so, then pushed forward another 400 yards, losing less men and taking a lesson in caution from the Boers. Thus, in short energetic rushes, they had managed to get within 900 yards of the enemy. On the top of the hillock a perfect deluge of bullets descended, and though the General had moved some 400 forward, so

The Flank Movement

quickly were the men hit that only thirty or so could use their rifles.

Afterwards the order was given to make breastworks, and there was a rush into the open to gather stones and rocks and boulders, when more men were stricken down. All the wounded could do was to creep to a rock in the rear, and there await the turn of events. Some lay as they crawled from 3 to 8.30 at night. It was impossible for them to be removed from the hill, as the Boers promptly fired on the stretcher-bearers. The sights and sounds were heart-rending. On one side was seen a man sent to his last account in a breath; on another was one still hobbling along and plying his rifle, with both ankles smashed. Here lay a poor fellow who had a splinter of rock driven clean through his lungs and out at his back; there languished another shot through the eye and brain—hopeless. All of them suffered patiently, but were madly athirst, craving for the hour when the sun should go down and they might get a chance of removal from the awful scene. And yet there were some, wounded too, who bore the long hours with amazing cheeriness. One, shot in the leg, lay on his back, drew forth his home letters, and perused them in the midst of a deadly fusillade. Another, more seriously wounded still, had the audacity to beguile the weary moments by taking a “snap-shot” at General Hart in the act of waving his sword and gesticulating. So much for pluck!

After sundown came the moment so longed for by the wretched beings, some of whom were now literally glued to earth in their own gore. But their miseries were not yet at an end. It took some two hours to go three-quarters of a mile in the darkness over the bad ground; there were creeks, and dongas, and boulders everywhere. No lights were allowed. In the jetty obscurity the Samaritans tripped and stumbled. “I was only dropped twice,” smiled a wounded youth when he was at last safely borne towards the stretcher-bearers. Others at intervals were brought in soaked with blood and rain, the hot stream and the cold mingling uncannily and to their supreme discomfort. Many who were wounded soon after midday only succeeded in reaching the field-hospital about half-past twelve at night. Some, more pathetic still, did not reach it at all! They had patiently waited till past the need of assistance!

Very pathetic were the circumstances attending the fall of Major Childe. It was said that on the previous day he had had forebodings of disaster, so much so that he even begged of his companions, in the event of his death, to put on his grave his chosen quotation, “Is it well with the child? It is well.” This dying wish was faithfully carried out. His burial took place on the day after the engagement, Lord Dundonald reading the solemn words of the funeral

The Transvaal War

service. Over his roughly-made grave was placed the gallant officer's name, the date of his death, and the text he had desired to have written on his tomb.

On the following day the fight was waged as fiercely as ever so far as artillery was concerned. Six field-batteries and four howitzers bombarded the enemy's position with tremendous vigour, and inflicted considerable loss. The Boer rifles were indefatigable, however, and continued their fiendish activity, and the Dutch or German gunners maintained their excellent practice with scarcely a moment's cessation.

While General Woodgate made a demonstration on the right, General Hart and his brigade continued to advance, and General Hildyard's troops joined in the attack from the valley past the right of Bastion Hill. Here a cleft appeared to open between the right and centre of the Boer position, and here the infantry, pushing on, practically divided the position in two; but it was found that the second line of defence was a formidable one; that the Boers had secured to themselves a magnificent point of vantage, whence they could sweep the country and command all the approaches with cross-fire, and even with converging fire; but, in spite of this, the troops tenaciously retained the positions they had gained, remaining there throughout the 22nd and 23rd, partially covered, so that in all their loss was inconsiderable.

The following officers were wounded in action near Venter's Spruit on the 20th of January:—

Staff—Colonel B. Hamilton, Major C. McGrigor. 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers—Captain R. B. Blunt, Second Lieut. M. G. Crofton, Second Lieut. E. I. M. Barret. 1st Border Regiment—Captain E. D. Vaughan, Second Lieut. Muriel. 1st York and Lancaster Regiment—Second Lieut. A. H. Kearsey. 2nd Dublin Fusiliers—Captain C. A. Hensley (since dead), Major F. English. 2nd Gordon Highlanders—Second Lieut. P. D. Stewart. Non-commissioned officers and men, 279. Royal West Surrey Regiment—Second Lieut. Du Buisson. 16th Lancers (Staff)—Captain Dallas.

SPION KOP

On Tuesday the 23rd, the continuous and steady assault of the Boer position seemed to be reaching a promising climax. For four days on the heights above the Venter Spruit the English and Irish Brigades had been doggedly moving up and on, and had carried one position after another in the teeth of many guns, and in the face of discomforts and discouragements multifarious. They had achieved a great deal with comparatively small loss, viewing the masterly manner in which the Boer guns were served. Fortunately the rifle-fire of the foe was not equal in accuracy to their shell-fire, most probably for the reason that the bucolic Dutchman had lost his ancient cunning in wielding the rifle, while in the management



TAKING THE 4.7 NAVAL GUN ACROSS THE TUGELA.

Drawing by J. Finnemore.

Spion Kop

of guns of position he was assisted—nay, relieved, by his German mercenaries. The astonishing dexterity of the Teutonic specialists in planting shells accurately at a range of over 3000 yards was a matter for marvel and admiration. Their success was attributed partly to the fact that the range had previously been marked, and also that spots had been selected over which it was known bodies of troops must eventually pass, and where it was certain every shot must be made to tell. For all that, and considering the cross-fire to which the troops were subjected on the opening days of Sir Charles Warren's attack, the losses were small. A council of war had been held, and three courses had been sifted: first, a frontal attack by night on the second Boer position, possibly attended by terrible loss; second, retirement beyond the river to seek for a new passage; third, attack by night on the mountain of Spion Kop, thence to enfilade and dominate all the Boer positions.

The last course was decided on. Spion Kop was to be attacked by night, the Boer trenches to be scooped out with the point of the bayonet, and the position held till again—by night—guns could be dragged up to assist in commanding the position of the foe. Spion Kop, the extreme left of the Boer position, once fortified, would become a key to the door of Ladysmith. So it was thought.

General Woodgate was informed of what was required of him, and Colonel Thorneycroft discussed the programme of the night attack. By his desire, satisfactory reconnaissances had been made, and there was every reason to believe that the attempt would be crowned with success. Accordingly, soon after midnight, General Woodgate, accompanied by Colonel àCourt, started forth with the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, the Royal Lancaster Regiment, a portion of Thorneycroft's Horse, and half a company Royal Engineers, supported by two companies of the Connaught Rangers and by the Imperial Light Infantry.

In pitch darkness the troops began their march up the southern slope of the giant mountain called Thaba Emunyama. The steepes were precipitous and rocky, and had to be negotiated with extreme care. Dongas were on this side, boulders on that; these had to be crept through and leapt over with stealthy, cat-like tread lest the enemy on the summit should be forewarned. Now and then the whirr of a bullet showed that the Dutchmen were awake, and were indulging in the pastime of sniping; otherwise the still, purple night spoke of peace. Led by General Woodgate and Colonel Blomfield, the Fusiliers (who, being seasoned fighters, were specially selected for the honour of engaging in "ticklish" work) ascended softly, advancing higher and higher in single file and in cautious silence. When more than half-way up, the approaching multitude was

The Transvaal War

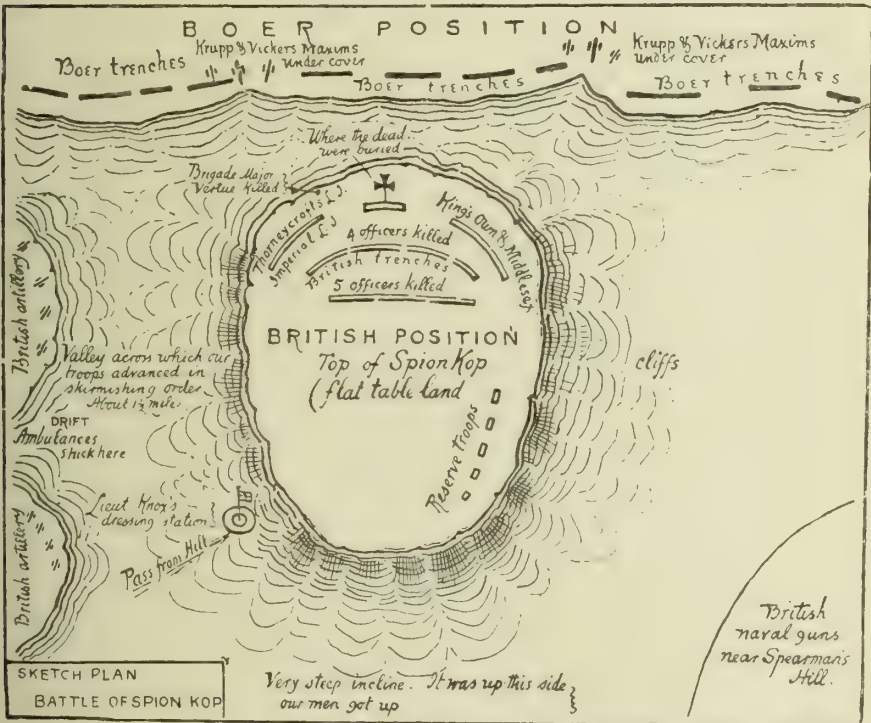
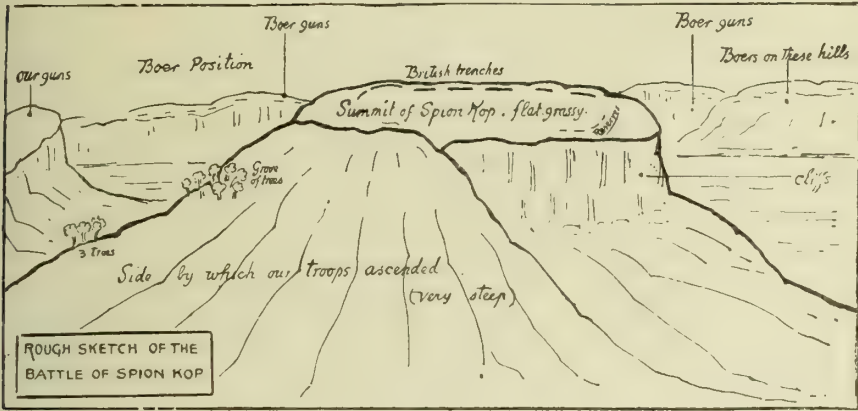
discovered, and the Boer picket, firing, fled. But the warrior crowd pressed on, Colonel Thorneycroft now leading the way, firing never a shot, and waiting till the trusty bayonet should teach its lesson. At three o'clock the summit was reached. The rain drizzled down, the clouds wrapt the hill, but the ardour of the troops was unabated. With a wild, ringing cheer, which echoed far over the hills, the position was carried. The force then proceeded to fortify itself so far as was possible in the hard and rocky ground that covered the heights.

It must here be noted that, owing to the darkness and the impossibility of judging exact distances, the trenches that were dug were badly situated. Instead of the whole or most part of the triangular tableland of the top, the force occupied merely a cramped position on the extreme point. This point was already marked and commanded by six Boer guns, while on the very hill itself was another hostile weapon. Sneaking around the crust of the kop—on the brim, as it were, while we occupied the crown—were sharpshooters and snipers, who from thence could pelt the northern hump of the slope; but in the dense atmosphere of the early morning these facts were unknown, and the effort, under cover of the darkness, to widen our position and capture the entire triangle was not then made.

While the hazy blue pall of the morning yet hung over the hills the trenches near the crest were occupied. The clouds hung low, and not a Dutchman was to be seen. For some time the troops were protected by the enshrouding mist, but so soon as it cleared, the Boers from their posts opened fire. They realised that the position to them was virtually one of life or death. Ping! ping! rang the rifles in chorus; bong! bong! went the guns, with a deep basso that reverberated in the hollows of the hills. It was an awe-striking reveillé. The hostile artillery had the range to a nicety; each shell followed the other with precision, and burst with terrific uproar on the patch of earthworks held by our infantry. Under this fearful fusillade our men, pelted yet undismayed, faithfully held their ground for two mortal hours. But the shell-fire made horrible gaps in the stalwart company; and by-and-by General Woodgate, who, having captured the position, still continued to direct and encourage his men, was wounded, Colonel Blomfield, of the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, took over command, and sent for reinforcements. He also fell. Then, by reason of merit rather than of seniority, Major Thorneycroft, local lieutenant-colonel, was appointed to take the place of the disabled chief. With the rising of the sun, with the development of day, developed the battle. Shrapnel from 15-pounders sprayed hither and thither; lyddite opened out earth-umbrellas far and wide. The roar and the roll of fiends in fury rent the clear, mimosa-scented atmosphere, and made even the

Spion Kop

bosom of the placid, silvery river shudder and quake as it wound and twisted and looped round Potgieter's Drift. For three and a



SKETCH AND PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF SPION KOP.

Made on the spot by Lieutenant E. B. Knox of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

half hours the tornado pursued its deadly course. Death—mutilation—agony—thirst—these were more prominent than the word glory in that long, immemorial period. Officers and men alike

The Transvaal War

could scarce lift a head lest they should meet the doom that hung over every creature that dared to stand upright in the murderous arena. They crouched, and took cover, and waited. The Boers, seeing their advantage, noting the terrible strain on the men that held the captured trenches, and the dance of death among Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, also bided their time. With great caution and "slimness" they finally commenced to creep up nearer and nearer, firing the while, and hoping, when things became a shade worse, to rush the position. Unfortunately there were no guns to rout the adventurous crew—not one handy Naval 12-pounder to sweep the enemy from the plateau. There they were, and there they meant to remain. Major-General Coke's brigade had started to get to the scene of action, and before long the Middlesex, Dorset, and Somerset Regiments were moving up the heights to the assistance of the battered regiments above. Major Walters, in charge of the ambulance, was also carrying out his grim, unusually heavy duties, but he, in the midst of his deeds of mercy, was caught by a shot and brought to earth.

By this time the glorious Lancashire Fusiliers, who held the captured trenches, had suffered most severely, not only from wounds, but from the agonies of thirst, for which there was no remedy. Their losses were horrible, and so also were those of Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, and they lay in many cases too far removed for the ambulance-bearers to reach them, and in too exposed a position for help from any around. Indeed, the state of affairs was so lamentable, the Boers forcing their way with such persistency, that the question of holding the hill hung by a thread. Three times before midday had the Dutchmen returned, driven the Britons back, and again been driven back themselves, till the ups and downs of the fight became like a perilous game of see-saw, none daring to prognosticate the conclusion. From noon till the late afternoon the Boers persisted in their desperate efforts to retake the crest of the hill. They evidently regarded the position of so much importance that reinforcements from their right were drawn away to help in the work. But the gallant fellows who were in possession hung doggedly to their prize. "Only a day," they said; "a day's more endurance, and to-morrow we shall mount guns. We shall be rulers of the roast." So they fought on with a will. Fortunately, at this time they had no premonition of impediments to success. The place turned out to be very difficult to hold. Its perimeter was large, and water was exceedingly scarce, and their ammunition, moreover, gave out at a critical period.

All these discoveries were gradually and painfully made as the day wore on, but nevertheless they resisted the assaults of the enemy with herculean vigour—with courage that was Spartan.

For two hours in the afternoon the scene on the summit of the

Spion Kop

kop was terrific. A hurricane of shot and shell swept the crest—it became a seething Inferno. Six quick-firing guns, two Hotchkiss guns, and numerous other weapons of more or less deadliness played upon the troops. Maimed and dying were being carried off as fast as possible. General Woodgate, brave as a lion, who had worked like a Trojan till struck down by a piece of shell, refused to leave. Usually a placid man, he was now irrepressible, protesting that he would remain on the field, though his sufferings—since he was shot over the left eye—must have been severe. Reinforcements had now arrived—the Middlesex, Dorsets, and Somersets—the plateau was crowded—overcrowded, some say—and death was taking a full meal. The Boer Maxim-Nordenfeldt, which had done its fell work at Colenso, perambulated from position to position with insatiable greed, preying on the life-blood of our bravest and best, and defying the efforts of our gunners below to locate it. Its work, and the work of the Mausers, lay everywhere—the hill was a shambles. Major Walters, chief of the Natal Volunteer Ambulance, had dropped; his brother, of the 2nd Scottish Rifles, was killed; Captain Murray, of the same regiment, was simply riddled with bullets—he received as many as four, yet persisted in leading on his men till struck down mortally. Colonel Buchanan Riddell, King's Royal Rifles, another hero, was slain later, while directing a flanking movement. The turmoil of those exciting hours was described by an officer:—

“I crawled along a little way with half my company, and then brought up others in the same manner. The men of the different regiments already on the hill were mixed up, and ours met the same fate. It was impossible, under the circumstances, to keep regimental control. One unit merged into another; one officer gave directions to this or that unit, or to another battalion. I saw some tents on the far side of the hill to our front, and knowing the enemy must be there, opened with volleys at 1800 yards, when we saw a puff of smoke, indicating that one of the Boer guns had just fired. We lay prone, and could only venture a volley now and again, firing independently at times when the shower of bullets seemed to fall away, and the shells did not appear likely to land specially amongst us. Everywhere, however, it was practically the same deadly smash of shells, mangling and killing all about us. The only troops actually close to me then were a party of the Lancashire Fusiliers inside a *schanze*, F Company of the Middlesex, and a mixed company of other troops on the left front. A good many shells from the big guns burst near us, and a lance-corporal of the Fusiliers was killed. The only point I could see rifle-fire proceeding from was a trench, the third, I believe, occupied by our troops on the right, and looking towards Spearman's.

The Transvaal War

“Presently I heard a great deal of shouting from this trench, in which were about fifty men. They were calling for reinforcements, and shouting, ‘The Boers are coming up.’ Two or three minutes afterwards I saw a party of about forty Boers walking towards the trench. They came up quite coolly; most of them had their rifles slung, and all, so far as I could observe, had their hands up. Our men in the trench—they were Fusiliers—were then standing up also, with their hands up, and shouting, ‘The Boers are giving in, the Boers are giving in.’ I did not know what to think, but ordered a company of my regiment to fix bayonets. We waited to see what would happen. Just then, when the Boers were close to the trench, some one—whether an enemy or one of our men—fired a shot. In an instant there was a general stampede, or rather a *mêlée*, my men rushing from their position and charging, while the Boers fired at the men in the trench, knocking several back into it, dead. Previous to this a Boer came towards me saying, ‘I won’t hurt you.’ He looked frightened, and threw down his rifle. Immediately afterwards the Boer fired, and there was a frightful muddle. I fired at one Boer, and then another passed. We were fighting hand to hand. I shot the Boer in order to help the man, and he dropped, clinging, however, to his rifle as he fell, and covering me most carefully. He fired, and I fell like a rabbit, the bullet going in just over and grazing the left lung. I lay where I fell until midnight. Subsequent to my being hit, parties of Boers passed twice over me, trying on the same trick, holding up their hands, as if they were asking for quarter. But our men refused to be taken in again, and fired, killing or driving them back.”

In this fight the Dutchmen were unusually obstinate. Over and over again they advanced to within seventy yards of the captured trenches, and from thence were only routed at the point of the bayonet. Their rushes were most valiant and persistent, and nothing but the heroism of officers and men could have withstood the overwhelming nature of the attack made upon them.

But dodges with the white flag and other frauds continued to be practised by the Boers. Colonel Thorneycroft escaped merely by an accident from an endeavour to play a trick upon him. The leader of a commando facing Thorneycroft’s Horse advanced with a white flag. The Colonel approached to the parley, but being suspicious, he told the leader to go back, as he refused to confer with him. Both retired, but before the Colonel could return to his regiment a volley was poured on him by the enemy. Another and more curious trick was practised on some of the privates. They were approached by an officer in kharki and directed to follow him to a better position. This they began to do till, at last, seeing themselves being led into the jaws of the enemy, they halted, and some one demanded to know

Spion Kop

who this bogus officer might be. At that moment the party was met by a storm of Boer bullets, and scarcely a man came whole from the adventure. Fortunately, the miscreant—an Austrian—who had played the trick on them was bayoneted ere all our gallant fellows dropped down. Strange, too, was the fate of gallant Colonel Blomfield, whose regiment, one of the smartest of the smart regiments present, had done such splendid work, and had held on to its post to the bitter end. This officer was wounded early in the day, as already recorded, and lay in a trench helpless and fainting



PLAN OF ENGAGEMENT AT SPION KOP.

for hours and beyond the reach of help. Finally, he was able to crawl out and make his way down the side of the hill—down the *wrong* side, unluckily for himself—and when next he was heard of he was a prisoner in Pretoria. That his life was saved at all was a marvel. Captain Tidswell, on seeing his Colonel wounded, rushed out with Sergeant Lightfoot and dragged him under a heavy fire into a trench, where he remained till the action was over.

During the early part of the day the Scottish Rifles and the 3rd Battalion of the King's Royal Rifles had been sent off to storm the kopjes forming an extension of Spion Kop, and thus occupy the enemy and relieve the pressure of his attack. The river was forded at Kaffir Drift by Colonel Buchanan Riddell's

The Transvaal War

troops, and soon after the battalion divided, half being led by the Colonel to the right, and half under Major Bewicke-Copley advancing to the left, of the objective. The enemy was everywhere—at the base of the kopjes and in the trenches up the sides. Still the troops advanced. The Dutchmen were shifted upwards inch by inch from their defences. The best cold Sheffield glittered near the trenches, and—the trenches were vacated! Up and up moved the Boers, on and on went the Rifles—on and up, rushing wildly, gallantly, charging and cheering, and finally gaining the crest!

Meanwhile the Scottish Rifles had advanced on Spion Kop. Nothing could exceed the smartness with which they scaled the steeps. They marched straight to the front firing line, and, in a word, saved the situation. No sooner did the enemy show his nose than the Scottish Rifles held him in check, and over and over again showed him that British tenacity was equal to both Boer stubbornness and slimness combined. The enemy could make no headway against them.

But the gallant action of the King's Royal Rifles was one of the grand deeds that end in the ineffectual. The battalion in its triumph had pressed the Boers upwards, but on doing so became practically isolated. The Boers were above and between them and our own troops, and as a result of its too forward movement the regiment stood in peril. Seeing their position of jeopardy, orders were sent up to retire. It was disgusting, heart-breaking, but it had to be done. The glorious company, after capturing two positions, slowly, reluctantly, moved down the hill they had ascended in the flush of triumph—moved again to their bivouac, sadder and wiser men. But they were only the first of many sad and sorry men that day. Meanwhile the battle on the great hill raged continuously, and shells, not alone those of the enemy, but those of our own guns which had attempted to assist, made the crowded kop a "veritable hell."

Presently, in the late afternoon a still more serious situation presented itself. Water, always scarce, threatened to run short altogether. Ammunition failed. A more appalling quandary in the drama of war can scarcely be imagined. Fortunately, to the relief of the plucky band on the heights, at last came a mule-train with much-desired water and cartridges, and the fight was pursued in more auspicious circumstances. But the Boer guns lost none of their persistency. Shells hurtled over the plateau, and as dusk set in, regiments and battalions and such officers as were left were mixed up in a surging, stumbling *mêlée*, wounded men firing last shots at the darkness, and hale ones dropping helpless as the blaze from the bursting projectiles showed, for one moment, the scene of agony.



GOING OUT TO THE ATTACK ON SPION KOP ON JANUARY 24

Drawing by R. Caton Woodville.

Spion Kop

When night made further activity impossible the position of affairs came under discussion. Was this sorry game worth the vast, the costly candle that was being expended—that yet might have to be expended? One commanding officer said “Yes!” another said “No!” It is stated that the decision rested with Colonel Crofton. He argued in favour of withdrawal. The troops were terribly mauled; the dead lay in crowds, a ghastly testimony of their impetuous courage. It had been found impossible to secure good cover against the enemy’s shrapnel and venomous, unceasing quick-firers. There had scarcely been time for the raking of rifle-pits, the construction of stone defences—the guns of the foe had been too active and unceasing—and besides this, the troops were unaccustomed to the sly art of crouching to cover. While the Colonial crawled like a stalker along dongas and through gulleys to get at his quarry, the hardy Briton always exposed himself as though pluck demanded that he should make a mark of himself. As some one at the time expressed it, “Their courage is incontestable, their methods absurd.” For this reason many of the trenches that our soldiers had so grandly defended became in the end their graves. The number of slain was appalling to see. The flower of the country lay struck down as the grass beneath the scythe of the reaper. It was a harvest of blood. The dead lay literally in stacks, the sole protection of their living comrades. Crowds upon crowds had pressed to the top of the great hill, offering a thick, compact front to the guns of the enemy, an imposing target to the horrible shells that merely breathed death as they passed. Liberally as the brigades exposed themselves, liberally they paid the penalty.

Late in the evening, guns—Naval guns and a battery—toiled towards the scene, rattling along through the night air to get into position for the morrow, and take revenge, though late, on the devastating “pom-poms” of the foe. But the die was cast. The withdrawal had begun. At 7.30 P.M. Colonel Thorneycroft gave the word. Slowly and in confused fashion the shattered braves began to wind downwards, and by nine the summit of the hill was almost deserted.

Pitiable were the circumstances of the retirement. The wounded, with staggering footsteps, crawled or crept down the mountain-side, reeling from loss of blood and exhaustion. Streams of officers and knots of men scrambled along calling for their units and finding them not. Drowsy, stupefied beings stumbled through dongas and broke their ankles against boulders, trying before they dropped to come in touch with their fellow-men. Many wandered aimlessly, twining the hill and passing over it into the hands of the enemy. Battalion was mixed with battalion, company with company. Dazed men searched in vain for the rendezvous. Some cursed, some swore,

The Transvaal War

some slept or seemed to sleep. One commanding officer sat helplessly on the spur of the hill, staring like a somnambulist, deaf to all consciousness of the outer world; another, lying among the trenches, was given up for dead.

The losses were terrific. The Royal Engineers, in some cases, were riddled with bullets. Major Massey died covered with wounds. Lieutenant Falcon, 17th Company, had arms, legs, knees, and helmet perforated with lead. In fact, no one has been able very clearly to describe in its hideous reality the awful picture of the battle of Spion Kop. A great holocaust some called it, and with truth, for the mountain from morn till night was literally scourged with lead, raked in all directions by Maxim-Nordenfeldts, artillery, and musketry. The tale is only writ in the wounds and on the graves of those who by a miracle took the summit, and by sheer grit held it in the face of overwhelming odds. Over a thousand men gave their lives to gain that which, in twenty hours—hours each one crowded with moments of heroism—had to be abandoned. The evacuation was carried out by order of Colonel Thorneycroft, one of the most valiant of the many valiant men who went up only to come down again. The excellence of his reasons was acknowledged, and his personal valour was beyond dispute. His authority for action was the sole source of debate. A military correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* related an incident of the fight which served to show what manner of commander had taken the place made vacant by the wounding of General Woodgate. Some men, about a score, who had lost their officers, threw down their arms to surrender, but Thorneycroft, seeing the act, rushed out to the front and called to the Boers to go on firing, for he commanded on the hill, and he alone would give the word to surrender. The Boers promptly responded. The officer went on to say, "Luckily a fresh regiment arrived at our side and restored the battle, but Thorneycroft undoubtedly saved a dreadful disaster by conduct so gallant that it recalls the old story of *Messieurs de la Garde Française, tirez.*"

Acts of gallantry were so numerous that V.C.'s were surely earned by the dozen. Lieutenant Mallock's devotion to duty was remarkable, and all regretted his loss. Captain Stewart, who also lost his life, assisted in maintaining the high traditions of the 20th Regiment.

The King's Royal Rifles lost three officers killed and five wounded. Their Colonel, the bravest of the brave, was hit while in the act of leading the regiment up the steep. He rose for one instant to read a message and was shot through the brain. The commanders of three leading companies were all wounded. Colonel Thorneycroft was injured, Captain the Hon.

Spion Kop

J. H. Petre, though twice struck, held on to his duty till another bullet laid him low. Captain O'Gowan was hit in two places, and Lieutenant Lockwood in four, as also was Captain Murray of the Scottish Rifles while attempting to lead his men towards the Boer trenches. Death claimed this splendid officer before the end of the day. Captain Walter was killed by a shell.

Curious stories were told of the behaviour of the Boers to the Colonial soldiers, stories which were hardly creditable to the Dutchmen. What their deadly missiles had failed to do the Boers themselves accomplished. They clubbed some unfortunates to death. These were Uitlanders, or suspected of being such. The correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* gave the names of two men slaughtered in this way—Corporal Weldon and Private Daddon, ex-Pretoria men! In addition to this brutality, explosive bullets in quantities were used. A drummer and a private of the Fusiliers were both killed by them. It was said that the quantity of losses sustained by Thorneycroft's, the Imperial Light Horse, and other South African "Irregulars" was due to special spite owing to a suspicion on the part of the Boers that these regiments might have been recruited from Uitlanders. This charge was so generally believed that many of the "Regulars" came to the assistance of the Colonials, transferring to them their badges in order to save them from the consequences of discovery; for it was distinctly stated that cases had occurred where the Boers deliberately shot the wounded whom they knew to be Colonials. So as to be thoroughly impartial, however, we must remember that there are blood-thirsty villains of all nationalities in times of peace as well as in times of war.

Next morning, General Buller, riding to the scene of action, then, and then only, became acquainted with the decisive move, the abandonment of Spion Kop. His astonishment was great—so was that of the Boers. Some said that the foe had already begun trekking, believing, in spite of their stout resistance, that the position was lost. Others argued that any trekking that they might have attempted meant merely a manœuvre consistent with their mobility to entice the British farther on into a trap from whence they could not have escaped. Be this as it may, a man of immense courage gave the order to withdraw, and he had his reasons, which reasons proved satisfactory to the Chief.

On the 25th the battle dragged on, the artillery barking and rifles snapping at each other, while the transport slowly prepared to retrace its winding way whither it had come, across the Tugela. The most gallant and perhaps the most melancholy feature of the war was at an end. General Warren's right flanking movement had failed, and the Commander-in-Chief decided that there was no

The Transvaal War

alternative but to again concentrate in the neighbourhood of Potgieter's Drift. The movement was conducted, under the personal direction of General Buller, with admirable precision and skill, and though there were weary and disgusted hearts among the bitterly disappointed troops, they bore their trial with dignity. The return was orderly, and no further misfortune happened. The enemy made no attempt to interfere. They, too, though successful in their defence, were hard hit.

The following casualty list represents the cost of the great flanking movement :—

Killed :—Staff—Captain Virtue, Brigade-Major. 3rd King's Royal Rifles—Lieut.-Colonel Buchanan Riddell, Lieutenant R. Grand, Second Lieutenant French-Brewster. 2nd Cameronians—Captain F. Murray, Captain Walter, Lieutenant Osborne. 17th Company Royal Engineers—Major Massey. 2nd King's Royal Rifles—Lieutenant Pope Wolferstan. 1st South Lancashire—Captain Birch. 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers—Captain Stewart, Lieutenant J. Mallock, Lieutenant Fraser. Imperial Light Horse—Lieutenant Rudall, Lieutenant Kynock. 2nd Middlesex Regiment—Captain Muriel, Second Lieutenant Lawley, Second Lieutenant Wilson. 2nd Lancaster Regiment—Major Ross, Captain Kirk, Lieutenant Wade. Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry—Captain Hon. W. Petre, Captain Knox-Gore, Lieutenant Grenfell, Lieutenant Newnham, Lieutenant M Corqudale, Lieutenant Hon. Hill-Trevor. South African Light Horse—Major Childe. 2nd West York—Captain Ryall. *Wounded* :—Staff—Major-General Sir E. Woodgate¹ (since dead), Captain Castleton, A.D.C. 3rd King's Royal Rifles—Major Thistlethwayte, Major Kays, Captain Beaumont, Captain Briscoe. 2nd Cameronians—Major S. P. Strong, Major Ellis, Captain Wanless-O'Gowan, Lieutenant H. V. Lockwood, Second Lieutenant O. M. Torkington, Second Lieutenant F. G. W. Draffen. Indian Staff Corps—Major Bayly. Bethune's Horse—Captain Ford. 17th Company Royal Engineers—Lieutenant Falcon. 1st South Lancashire—Lieutenant Raphael. 1st Border Regiment—Captain Sinclair M'Lagan, Second Lieutenant Andrews. 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers—Lieut.-Colonel Blomfield (taken prisoner), Major Walter, Lieutenant Griffin, Lieutenant Wilson, Lieutenant Charlton. Royal Engineers—Captain Phillips. Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers—Captain Maclachlan. 2nd West York—Lieutenant Barlow. 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers—Captain Wolley-Dod, Captain White, Captain Ormond, Lieutenant Campbell. 1st York and Lancaster—Lieutenant Halford, Lieutenant Duckworth. 2nd West Surrey—Captain Raitt (since dead), Captain Warden, Lieutenant Smith, Lieutenant

¹ Colonel (local Major-General) E. R. P. Woodgate, who was in command of the 9th Brigade, joined as Ensign in the 4th Foot on April 7, 1865, and became Brevet-Colonel on June 26, 1897. He commanded a Regimental District from September 1897 to April 1898; was on special service in the Ashanti expedition from September 1873 to March 1874, also on special service in South Africa from June 1878 to November 1879; was Brigade Major in the West Indies from February 1880 to February 1885. He was employed with the West African Regiment from April 9, 1898; with the Aby-sinian expedition in 1868; and was present at the capture of Magdala, for which he received a medal. He served in the Ashanti war, 1873-74, and was present at the actions of Essaman, Ainsah, Abrakrampa, and Faysoonah, at the battle of Amoaful and capture of Coomassie. For these services he received a medal with clasp. He also served through the Zulu campaign in 1879, at the action of Kambula and battle of Ulundi, and received a medal with clasp and his brevet of Major; and in 1898 in West Africa, in command of forces in expeditions against Sierra Leone insurgents. He was fifty-four years of age.



THE SCENE ON SPION KOP—MAJOR THORNEYCROFT'S DESPERATE SITUATION.

Drawing by Frank Craig from a Sketch by a British Officer.

The Third Great Effort—Vaal Krantz

Wedd. 2nd Middlesex Regiment—Major Scott-Moncrieff, Captain Savile, Captain Burton, Second Lieutenant Bentley. 2nd Lancaster Regiment—Captain Sandbach, Lieutenant Dykes, Lieutenant Stephens, Second Lieutenant Nixon. Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry—Captain Bettington, Lieutenant Foster, Lieutenant Baldwin, Lieutenant Howard. *Missing*:—2nd Lancashire Fusiliers—Captain Elmslie (taken prisoner), Captain Hicks, Captain Freeth. 2nd Middlesex Regiment—Lieutenant Galbraith. 2nd Lancaster Regiment—Major Carleton. Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry—Lieutenant Power-Ellis.

THE THIRD GREAT EFFORT—VAAL KRANTZ

At this time it seemed as though the word "As you were" had been spoken by the military authorities. But it was, alas! no longer possible to believe that the position was as it had been; for it was now a case of melancholy experience plus previous melancholy experience. Nearly six weeks before, the great frontal attack at Colenso had failed—failed partly by reason of the tremendous strategical position taken up by the Boers, with the river Tugela as a natural moat for its protection, and partly on account of the disaster to the guns, which completely upturned the plan of Sir Redvers Buller's calculations.

Now a great flank movement had been attempted, and had failed as signally as the first frontal effort. It was really discovered that a flanking movement, truly interpreted, was impossible, for there is no flank to a circle, and the Boer lines were found to be equally strong all round from Colenso to Ladysmith.

This horrible discovery naturally made the situation very grave indeed. The effect on the garrison of Ladysmith—the terrible rebound from delighted anticipation to amazed despair—may be partly imagined. None, indeed, save those who had so valiantly endured the terrible changes in the barometer of expectation could entirely gauge the sensitivity of those ill-fed, debilitated thousands, ravaged by disease, privation, and warfare, who hung oscillating day after day between salvation and destruction. They now knew that their saviours, Sir Charles Warren and his force, were withdrawn to the south of the Tugela. This was done because the river forms a species of natural rampart, beyond which the country—a species of South African Switzerland—offered no facilities to an attacking force. It was found that the Boers had carefully fortified every position already well formed by nature for purposes of defence. It was the same as Colenso. The theatre of war was margined by fortifications, regular galleries, rising tier upon tier on originally favourable positions. The opportunity to occupy these favourable positions the Boers owed entirely to us—to the procrastination and pacific tendencies of the British Government. It was now owned that Sir Alfred Milner should have gone to the Conference with a forest of rifles at his back, an army of mounted

The Transvaal War

Colonials at his elbows, and some big guns "up his sleeve." As it was, while he talked and the Government spent its money on telegraphic palaver, the Boers, assisted by their German mercenaries, were marking out the choicest positions, not for their own defence, but for the defence of Natal (which they were allowed time to seize) against the "magnanimous" Briton. Yes, the Boers from the beginning had decided to talk the British into delay, and had profited gloriously by their strategy. In our first volume, a letter on "Boer ignorance" candidly showed the Dutchman's hand—too late, of course, for then the trick was bound to be taken. The Dutchmen conferred with Sir Alfred Milner to suit their own ends and to further their main objects; firstly, to keep the war outside their own territories, and secondly, to confine it to soil that, geographically and by a species of hereditary instinct, they knew to perfection. They, boy and man, loved those kopjes. In those semi-circular windings, those almost inaccessible peaks and cones, those boulders which afforded eternal cover to the sniper, those vast arenas of open veldt where an approaching enemy might be stormed upon by a deluge of leaden hail—they had mentally played hide-and-seek for eighteen years. Now the reality of the game was come. From the early days when Sir Harry Smith found them prospecting the fair land of Natal, they had learnt its intimate geography. We, to whom the fair land belonged, had barely heard of the Tugela or the region around it. To us it was superficially known only at the cost of dire experience. The Boers had been aware that the British advance northwards through the Free State would lie across flat fair country, and knowing this, had decided that during the month taken to land the British army they must take up their positions beyond and around it; and so excellent was their cunning, so amicably pacific the temper of the British nation, that they were enabled to follow their strategic programme in its entirety, and plant themselves in firmly rooted masses to await our arrival!

The problem of how to dislodge them and how to relieve Ladysmith was once more staring Sir Redvers Buller in the face with hard and unbending austerity. According to military experts, who viewed the plan of campaign with dispassionate eyes, the fate of Ladysmith should have been left out of the calculations. The troops should have been massed to a common centre and at the south, and from thence boldly advanced into the Free State. But against that opinion was the picture of the noble ten thousand inside a beleaguered town, a grand British multitude, who had been kept for months hoping against hope, fighting bravely, and praying of the Almighty to hasten the hour of their deliverance. They could not be left. While he had men and guns the General felt he must go on. But how? Certainly not by the newer route. The re-

The Third Great Effort—Vaal Krantz

capture of Spion Kop was decided to be impracticable, and the force remained stationary south of the Tugela while the complicated situation was reviewed.

The General, whatever his misfortunes, had lost none of the confidence of his troops. As he himself said of them, "The men were splendid." They were disgusted at being a second time defeated without being beaten, and disappointed at again being forced back from the road to Ladysmith; but their steadfast faith in their chief was unalterable. Sir Redvers Buller again addressed his warriors, promising them they should be in Ladysmith soon, and the men, Britons to the core, again said in their hearts, "We shall."

To replace 1600 killed and wounded in the late actions, drafts of 2400 men had now arrived. A mountain battery, A Battery R.H.A., and two fortress guns had strengthened the artillery, while two squadrons of the 14th Hussars had been added to the cavalry, thus bringing the strength of the force to 1000 more than the number which had started for Spion Kop. This was an imposing increase, but its value at the present time was much less than it would have been had Sir Redvers Buller originally taken the field with a proper complement of men and guns. "To do the thing handsomely we want 150,000 men," a tactician declared at the onset; but nobody heeded him, and in consequence of this heedlessness the complications in Natal had arisen.

"However," as a military officer expressed it, "there was not a sore head nor a timid heart in Buller's army. As we lie in our bivouacs at night, the Southern Cross and a thousand constellations watching over our slumbers, we dream of the Angel of Victory, and in our dreams we hear the flapping of her wings."

The optimism of the army was undiminished. There was no doubt whatever that they would relieve Ladysmith, but the when and the how remained as yet unsolved. The troops had not yet sustained actual defeat at the hands of the Boers, and, while our losses could be replaced, and *were* being replaced, the recuperative power of the Boers was nil. Indeed it was stated that they had come to the end of their resources, and that they were already forcing Kaffirs to fight for them in the trenches. Later on it was discovered that females even—true to the ancient sporting instinct of the Boer woman—were lending a hand in the management of the rifle.

At last, after some days of deliberation, a third great attempt to reach the imprisoned multitude in Ladysmith was planned out.

A week of waiting and then a new advance was decided on. Seventy guns drew up in line on the hills to prepare the way for another gigantic move. This time Sir Redvers Buller's plan was to occupy a hill called Vaal Krantz and get forward between Spion Kop and the Doorn Kloof ranges. But after a very short yet

The Transvaal War

valorous essay, it was discovered that there were veritably cannon to right of them, cannon to left of them. The Boers commanded the hills on either side the road through which the troops must pass. Not only were there guns on both sides, but these Krupps and Creusot cannon far outranged anything that our artillery could bring to bear on them. The Naval guns alone were capable of not only barking but biting, and these three were not enough to meet the formidable array of the Republicans.

On the 5th of February, however, the gallant attempt was made. The cavalry moved forward about 6 A.M.—one brigade under Colonel Burn-Murdoch advanced to the right below Swartz Kop, the



PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF VAAL KRANTZ

Colonials under Lord Dundonald kept nearer to Potgieter's Drift, Sir Charles Warren with one brigade remained west of Mount Alice in a position commanding the road leading to Potgieter's Drift. The Naval guns meanwhile came into action, shelling the Boer positions, dongas, and trenches, and every imaginable hiding-place with immense energy, but with little result. The Boers in their trenches were quiet, as usual reserving themselves for an effective outburst later on. Meanwhile the Lancashire Brigade (now under Colonel Wynne) were advancing in skirmishing order to the tune of the mighty orchestra, while above an officer of sappers in the balloon spied out the Boer haunts, and directed accordingly. By nine o'clock pandemonium was unloosed—lyddite bellowed, shrapnel

The Third Great Effort—Vaal Krantz

clattered over the whole fortified face of Brakfontein, while the infantry steadily moved on. Presently from dongas and trenches, at ranges of 1000 yards and less, came the crackling of rifles, to which our troops responded by volleys now and again. Between these volleys they proceeded steadily, regardless of the uproar and the fell work of the eternally active sniper.

While this feint attack was taking place on the left before the now flaming ridges of Brakfontein, a real and vigorous move was being made on the extreme right for the purpose of carrying the crest of Vaal Krantz, which was then thought to be the key to the direct road to Ladysmith, and was not very strongly fortified by the Dutchmen. The Royal Engineers with immense energy set to work laying a pontoon bridge across the treacherous depths in the direction of Skiet's Drift, an operation which had to be performed with infinite patience and pluck, as the Boers were no sooner aware of their activities than they plied their Mausers with a will. This crossing-place, styled Munger's Ford, now attracted the attention of the whole Boer artillery, and the "pom-poms" and 40-pounders of the enemy contrived to render the locality anything but an enviable place of rendezvous. Our pieces, from their hiding-place among the trees in the neighbourhood of Swartz Kop, soon bombarded the Boer position with equal activity. By ten o'clock the bridge had been thrown across the river, and General Lyttelton and his troops were preparing for the assault of Vaal Krantz. The artillery now made its finishing demonstration before Brakfontein, there being no necessity—now that the troops had come successfully across the pontoon bridge—for a continuation of the feint attack. For this reason the Lancashire Brigade was now ordered to retire. The gallant fellows, having done what was required of them, marched back in excellent order to their original position.

All this while shells were shrieking, lyddite was bursting, and musketry crackling, till the whole earth seemed riven with an enormous convulsion. The gunners had some terrific experiences, and nobly, in a truly alarming position, they comported themselves. They were on low ground, exposed without shelter to the Boer works, which dominated the plain; yet they pursued their labours with unerring care and intelligence that was truly remarkable. Shell plumped in their midst, under the limbers, over the guns, above their heads, round their feet. They stuck to their duty. Horses dropped and shrieked in their agony, gunners fell shot through the heart and were carried away. Loudly the vociferous chorus of death went on, steadily the gunners took their share of the fearful drama of destruction. To show the vast amount of "grit" that these gunners could boast, an incident of the day must be

The Transvaal War

recorded. About noon the batteries were ordered to approach nearer to Vaal Krantz and prepare the way for the infantry assault. The guns, ever under a scathing fire, moved off in due order to take up the fresh position on the right facing Vaal Krantz. Finally they came to the last waggon, an ammunition waggon belonging to the 78th Battery R.A., which was horseless. The team had been wiped off by the enemy. Nevertheless the gunners put their shoulders to the wheel, and, with a mighty effort, rolled the machine straight through the fiery hurricane to a place of safety! The conduct of the Jack Tars also stuck another feather in their already well-decorated caps. While the new balloon made its descent it became an object of attention, and was saluted vigorously by the enemy. Nevertheless the sailors stuck to their work, held the basket, took possession of the truculent aërial vessel, and marched off with it under a galling fire.

By-and-by, when Vaal Krantz had been thoroughly searched and swept by the British batteries, and the snipers from the base of Doorn Kloof had been partially reduced to silence by the joint efforts of the artillery and Hildyard's Brigade, Lyttelton's gallant band began to move off from the direction of Munger's Farm on the road to Vaal Krantz. It was now the early afternoon, but from all sides the deadly missiles of the enemy still bellowed and hooted. Still the Durham Light Infantry, with the 3rd King's Royal Rifles on their right, pushed steadily on—forward from the river and up the precipitous broken face of the hill. Cheering, they went, clambering and leaping, and whether it was the menacing roar, or the suggestion it gave of coming steel that stirred them, certain it was that few of the foe remained to meet the charge.

The Boers saw them—heard them—gauged the meaning of the lusty British cheer—and bolted. Scarcely any elected to fall victim to the bayonet. Those who were there threw up their hands and appealed for mercy. These were promptly made prisoners, and the British, for the time being, reigned supreme on the hill. But their reign had its discomforts. Dutchmen crowded the ground, west, east, and north of them, dosing them liberally with lead from their rifles, while their position was perpetually pounded by the big guns of the enemy. These, vomiting on the eastern slopes of the hill, set fire to the grass and added to the discomforts of the position by surrounding it with appalling fumes, which choked and blinded, and destroyed the view of the Dutchmen's haunts. Nevertheless, the kopje once gained, the men rushed along the crest and entrenched themselves in a spot that looked as though it had been overtaken by a prairie fire. Our shells had effectually cleared the grass and scrub. The gunners from the surrounding kopjes kept a sharp lookout, firing at the Boers

The Third Great Effort—Vaal Krantz

as they brought up their guns from all directions, while General Lyttelton maintained his ground. Meanwhile efforts were made to get the batteries forward to the hill, but the task was a difficult one, and the position was strengthened and enlarged in order to assist in the accomplishment of the desired object. Until guns could be mounted and made to defy the active aggression of the "pom-poms," Creusots, and other deadly weapons of the enemy, there could be no hope of getting the troops and their baggage through to Ladysmith. At this time an obstinate effort to gain lost ground was made by the Republicans, but owing to the doughty resistance of the Scottish Rifles and the King's Royal Rifles, the attempt to dislodge them entirely failed. Towards seven o'clock a drizzling rain and darkness descended. The troops which had gathered together between Swartz Kop, Munger's Drift, and the newly acquired hill were forced to bivouac where they were for the night, Sir Redvers Buller and his staff remaining on the field with the men.

At dawn on the 6th of February the Boers resumed their activity. Long Tom—the first to awake—with his big black snout snorted sonorously. Bang went a hundred-pound shell across the plain—helter-skelter flew the British Tommies, who were enjoying their morning tea, and crash and splash went their delicious brew. Fortunately no serious harm was done. A few horses were killed. But after this began an artillery duel of vigorous nature. This was chiefly directed against General Lyttelton's troops on Vaal Krantz. The Boers seemed everywhere, more ubiquitous than usual. From the lower crests of Spion Kop, from the peak of Doorn Kloof, from the mountains commanding the road to Ladysmith, flame vomited, and lead and steel and powder spouted and spluttered.

The fact was that during the night the Boers, in order to proceed with the work of defence, had set fire to more grass in the neighbourhood of the British position, and utilised the illumination for the transfer of their guns from one place to another. Early, therefore, they were enabled to greet the camp with the roar of a Creusot gun and other weapons from all quarters playing upon the position. Shells burst everywhere, some even reaching head-quarters. It was said that Buller, the imperturbable, welcomed them. Certainly his Spartan-like disregard of danger was remarkable, and was responsible for the superb nonchalance of those who served under him. Still, with his courage he displayed caution, the caution that only a courageous man would dare to display. He decided later on that his move was impracticable, that more lives should not be spent in futile effort. Of this anon. While the Creusots and Krupps pounded the hill, the Boers strove their uttermost to regain their hold on the lost position. Meanwhile the Naval guns rumbled and rampaged, ammunition waggons blew up, earthquakes filled the clear blue

The Transvaal War

atmosphere with avalanches of dust, and one of the enemy's cherished weapons on Spion Kop was knocked clean out of action.

Late in the afternoon, the worn-out troops of Lyttelton's Brigade were relieved by Hildyard's men, who came in from a violent night-attack by the enemy. This in their usual gallant style was repelled by the East Surrey and the West Yorks—the veteran West Yorks, who had learned not a little from Beacon Hill onwards.

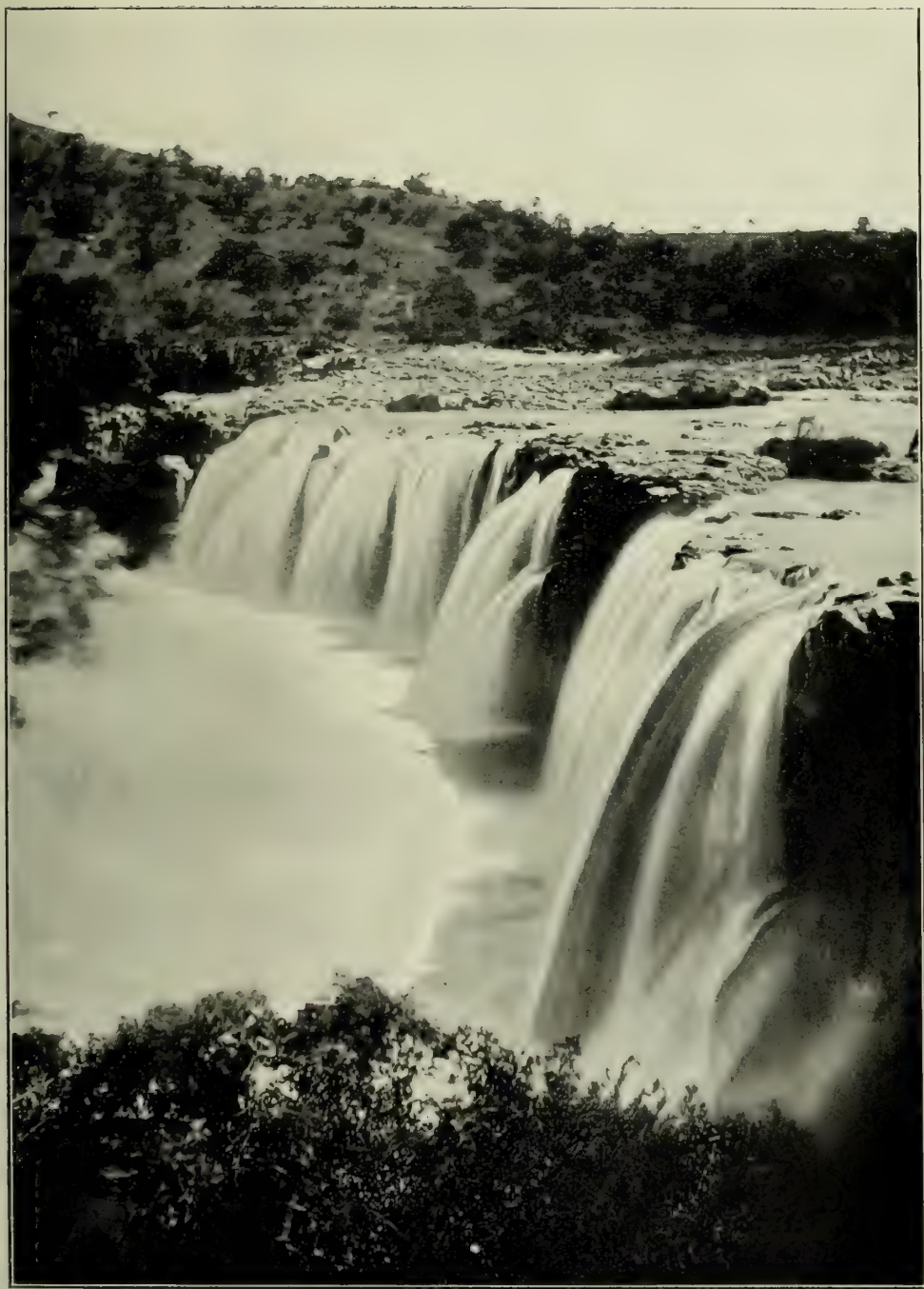
On Wednesday the firing grew terrific. More guns were brought up, seemingly from the bowels of the earth; they were posted everywhere—another 6-inch Creusot gun, Maxim cannons, two 30-pounders, three “pom-poms,” in addition to the death-dealing weapons of the previous day. Shells hurtled and burst on hill and dale, mountain and valley, smoke, flame, and dust spouted forth, making the atmosphere dense, torrid, and fearsome. Still Hildyard's dauntless brigade held their ground unflinchingly, while the Naval guns strove bravely, but strove in vain, to tackle the great snorting crew of the opposition. It seemed as though the advance must be accomplished not merely through a zone, but a sheath of fire, for the road to Ladysmith was barred from end to end, a sheer *cul-de-sac*, with flame and death for its lining.

Our troops during the whole day hung tenaciously to Vaal Krantz, while the Dutchmen obstinately challenged their right to be there. But nothing appreciable was achieved, and evacuation seemed the wiser and more profitable course to pursue. By this time it began to be recognised that the strategic value of Vaal Krantz for turning the Brakfontein position had been over-estimated, and that an advance would necessitate the routing of the Boers from Brakfontein and the taking and holding of Doorn Kloof, if our communications through the valley were to be maintained.

There was no glory in trying to proceed in the teeth—nay, into the jaws—of so overpowering a foe, a foe who was on the eve of outflanking us. It would have been walking into a fiery furnace—into the pocket of hell. Another council of war took place. Retirement was suggested. General Hart, as distinguished for valour as General Lyttelton for brave discretion, proposed the storming of Doorn Kop. He and his were ready for everything: he had Ireland at his back. But Pat was not to be thrown away on an impossible undertaking, and consequently the majority had their way, and the retirement was effected. On Friday the whole glorious persevering band were again across the Tugela, preparing to strike out in a fresh direction.

The following is the list of casualties between the 5th and 7th of February:—

Killed:—1st Durham Light Infantry—Major Johnson Smith; Second Lieutenant Shafto.



FALLS ON THE TUGELA RIVER.

Photo by Wilson, Aberdeen.

Disappointment at Ladysmith

Wounded:—1st Durham Light Infantry—Lieut.-Colonel Fitzgerald; Captain Lascelles; Second Lieutenant Lambton; Second Lieutenant Appleby. 1st Rifle Brigade—Captain Thorp; Captain Talbot; Lieutenant Blewitt; Lieutenant Ellis; Lieutenant Sir T. Cunninghame, Bart. 3rd King's Royal Rifles—Lieutenant Sims. Royal Artillery—Lieut.-Colonel Montgomery, Captain Dawson, 78th Battery R.F.A. 2nd Scottish Rifles—Second Lieutenant Ferrars. 2nd West Yorkshire—Second Lieutenant Bicknell. 2nd East Surrey—Captain White. R.A.M.C., Major Rose.

DISAPPOINTMENT AT LADYSMITH

The fearful and ghastly activity of the 6th of January ceased with dusk. Night descended: she came softly as the footsteps of angels moving lightly among the tranquil dead. The moon, with pale white serenity, looked down on the scene of carnage, so still, so appallingly still; and the dots of twinkling stars seemed like a thousand eyes of heaven, seeing and inquiring how the face of the fair earth could grow so changed within a day. And everywhere there moved leaden hearts and feet weary with the long strain of foregone hours. Hunger, exposure, and long vigils had become a daily routine, but this close and sustained attack, and the terrible havoc it had wrought on the weakening numbers, brought with it new alarms. True, the bayonet, the trusty bayonet, had served its turn, and might serve again, so long as strength would hold out. But there were doubts. The Russian general Suvaroff once said, "The ball is a fool, but the bayonet is a brick." He took it for granted that the bayonet even must needs have a man, and not the ghost of a man, at the back of it; and the poor heroes in Ladysmith were fast becoming shadows of the hale and muscular fellows who had scaled the steeps of Talana Hill and broken the echoes of Elands-laagte with the yell of victory. Sadly and solemnly they now set themselves to the pathetic work of removing the slain.

On the 7th of January one of the Boer medical officers rode in under a Red Cross flag, requesting the burial of the British dead. A party started to fulfil this sad office, and while they wandered about picking up the melancholy mutilated forms, the Boers assisted in the task, and in some cases helped to dig the graves and carry the slain; conversing the while with such perfect amity, that it was almost impossible to believe they were deadly foes. Deeply pathetic was the reading of the solemn burial service by the commanding officer, for Britons and Boers stood side by side, and one of the latter, moving apart, uttered a short prayer that the war would soon be at an end. This was followed by the singing of a hymn in Dutch, a quaint, simple, earnest solemnity, which was vastly touching to all.

The curious blend of courage and pleasantness, of trickery and barbarity, in the Boer character has been remarked upon before.

The Transvaal War

It was never more displayed than in the dealings of the Boers around Ladysmith. On one day they would shell an hospital, or rather the Town Hall, knowing it to serve as an hospital; on another they would treat the wounded with almost brotherly consideration. For instance, one man in the 19th Hussars, who was wounded on January 6, and subsequently taken prisoner, gave a refreshing account of Boer manners. Though shot in the arm, he remained at his post till dark, and then in the gloom mistook his way to camp and wandered down the wrong side of the hill. He was captured and detained till morning, while his wound was dressed and cared for. Then he was sent back to camp armed with a tin of jam and a box of chocolate! A somewhat similar experience was related by another man, one of the Gordons, who was wounded and taken prisoner on Waggon Hill early in the morning, and was removed in charge of an old Boer to a place of safety half-way down



BRITISH 7-POUNDER FIELD-GUN.

the slope. From here he subsequently escaped. In the *mêlée* that followed the Devons' charge across the plateau in the thick of the hailstorm, the Boers, shouting in Dutch that the rooineks were upon them, stampeded, and consequently the prisoner was left to his own devices. He thereupon rejoined the troops.

The Boers in the fight had been animated by unusual confidence. They had seemed assured of victory. Their demeanour was cool and deliberate, some of them doing an hour's firing while others put in a half-hour's nap under cover of the rocks. All their preparations were made with a view to spending Sunday in Ladysmith, and their tents were ready to be pitched immediately they had obtained possession of the ridge. They, in fact, firmly believed that they would make a repetition of Majuba, and it was noticed that their tactics were identical with those observed on that tragic occasion. Curiously enough, an exceedingly interesting relic of Majuba came to hand. A rifle bearing the mark "Majuba" and the name of the 58th Regiment was found on an old Boer. It had evidently been captured on the fatal day when Colley fell.

Disappointment at Ladysmith

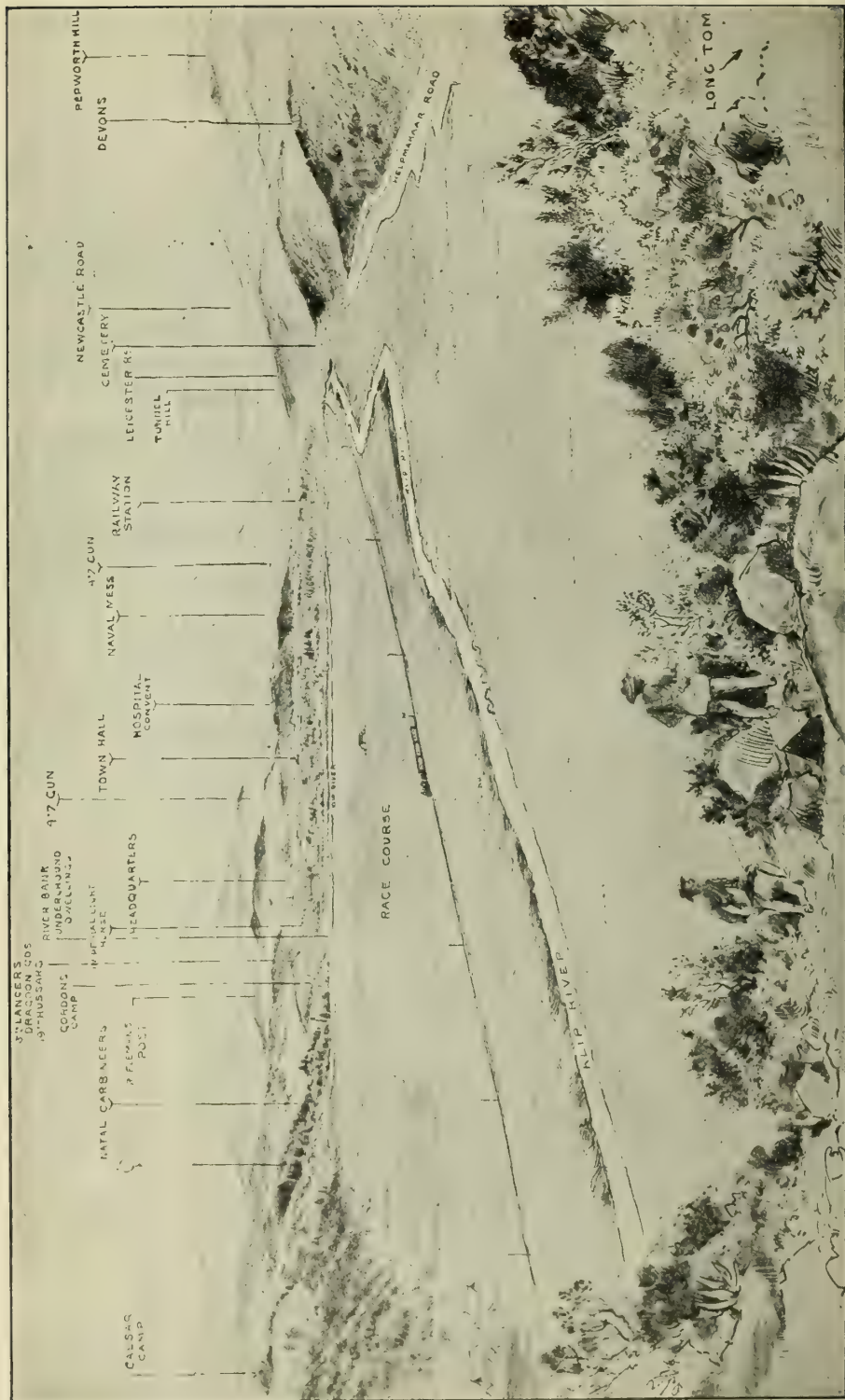
Much regret was felt for the loss of Lord Ava, one of the cheeriest of soldiers and most handsome and brilliant of men. He had served with the 17th Lancers, and had also cast in his lot with the irregulars in South Africa under Methuen. He was essentially a sporting and a romantic figure in all circles of London society, having resuscitated the fortunes of Ranelagh and engaged himself actively in plans and projects for the brightening of social life. He was moreover a general favourite, and sympathy with Lord Dufferin on the loss of his promising heir was great.

Now that the rivers were flooded the service of native runners was precarious, and less than ever was known of the outside world. But the Boers were seen to be in active movement on the distant hills, and there was a very general belief that the quiet that was enjoyed was due to some advance movement on the part of General Buller that was demanding the attention of the Dutchmen. This belief was confirmed by the sight of two machine-guns which were being galloped off post-haste to a destination unknown.

Since Christmas the prices had gone up. Eggs by the middle of January were worth 19s. a dozen, and jam cost 6s. 6d. a tin. Condensed milk was sold for 10s. a tin, other things, particularly medicines, were becoming priceless. An appalling apathy almost approaching despair had settled on the community. It was going on for three months since they had been shut off from the outside world, during which their losses had exceeded 1500 in slain, wounded, and missing, yet they were no nearer release. Indeed, each began to wonder whether death or Sir Redvers Buller's force would reach them first. One month after another passed, and with them, precious lives, yet little fuss was made, for death was a common visitor. Much regret was felt at the loss on the 15th of the brilliant author and correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, Mr. G. W. Steevens. His was a young career, rich in promise. But death is a connoisseur—he chooses the best. Only a few days before, Mr. Mitchell, sub-editor of the *Johannesburg Star*, and Lieutenant Stabb (Naval Reserve) of the *Times of India*, had been carried off by enteric fever; while young Ferrand, sometime a correspondent of the *Morning Post* and a trooper of the Light Horse, fell in action on the 6th.

But soon a change came. Sounds of unusual guns reached their ears—ears now well attuned to all the surrounding noises. Though news by heliogram came slowly and at long intervals, all were conscious that something was afloat.

They were soon wild with excitement and anticipation. Not only could Sir George White's garrison hear the distant thunder of the guns of the relieving column, a sound which made heavenly music to their ears, but from the lookout posts on the heights held by them they could occasionally see the bursting of the shells fired



THE SIEGE OF LADYSMITH, JAN. 1900. VIEW FROM BULWANA HILL.

From a sketch by George Lynch, War Correspondent.

The hospital train is here shown on its way to Intombi Camp with its daily load of sick and wounded.



LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR CHARLES WARREN, G.C.M.G.

Photo by Elliott & Fry, London.

Disappointment at Ladysmith

by the Naval guns from the region of Potgieter's Drift. The attention of the investing force was now distracted; the Dutchmen were concentrating their energies to repel the movement of the British troops on the Upper Tugela, and continued to send reinforcements westward to meet the demand on their resources there. But they strengthened their works on the north of the town, added some more howitzers and fired a few shells by way of introduction.

At this time impatience and anxiety arrived at an almost painful pitch. Every soul was panting for the signal that might call upon them to co-operate in the final tug-of-war which should set Ladysmith free. Acutely were the movements of General Buller's relieving force watched from the highest points in the town. Intense was the interest displayed as every bursting shell threw forth its dense volumes of brown smoke, and showed how the friendly lyddite worked to the rescue. The garrison looked forth breathlessly for the coming of relief, hoping, praying, doubting, fearing, with nothing to vary the ever-recurrent anguish of anticipation.

At this date a journalist made a daring sortie on his own account, and reached Durban in safety. He left with permission at nightfall on the 18th of January, and, guided by a wily Kaffir, made tracks for Chieveley. Having gone about two miles to the east of Cæsar's Camp and approached unwarily a Boer picket, he was promptly challenged. Then ping! ping! ping! a swift whistling sound of Boer bullets, and silence! The journalist, to use a sporting phrase, was lying "doggo." Not a shot touched him. Flat on his stomach he remained for fully half an hour with bated breath, then, when murmurs of the disquieted Boers ceased to ruffle the night air, he resumed his way, groping on hands and knees, and wishing fervently that he had taken lessons in deportment earlier—from the quadrupeds. Perilous was the onward journey, clambering and crawling up hill and down dale, and falling over rocks and stones in the pitch darkness. Daylight saw him at the hut of a friendly native not far from Chieveley, and here concealed, he spent twenty-four hours of terrible suspense till it was time again to proceed on his journey. The Boers almost discovered him. They called at the hut for milk, absorbed it, and looked about suspiciously, while the man of the pen was penned in amongst a heap of blankets, a perspiring mass, quaking but safe.

Meanwhile with the rumour of battle in the air, hope revived. It continued to increase as the British positions from the heights around the town became visible—the newly gained positions on Swartz Kop and the eminences near the Tugela at Potgieter's and Trichardt's Drifts. Every red flash was like a smile of welcome—every roar of bursting shrapnel seemed a very chorus of jubilation.

The Transvaal War

To the ears of the besieged the tremendous awe-striking cannonade appeared as the loved assurance of Great Britain, their deliverer, saying, with grand majestic tone, "I am coming." In the distance the Boers could be seen in frenzied activity inspanning their waggons, and towards the evening they were observed trekking northwards towards Van Reenan's Pass. Many conjectures were rife, and subsequently on the 25th curiosity grew to fever heat. Surely the British were in possession of Spion Kop! Decidedly they were masters of the situation! Yet in the nek below, by the light of the telescope, Boer camps could be seen on the plains; under cover of the great hill Boer cattle were grazing. What could this mean? Had the Boers gone and left everything to the mercy of their victors? or were they merely in hiding, intending to return at nightfall, and remove their valuables? Certainly the Burghers were to be viewed mounted and decamping in the direction of the pass, and also winding strings of waggons pursuing their slow way in the same direction. Still the riddle remained unsolved. Night fell. The suspense grew more and more fevered; it became almost a delirium. There was little sleep; then, when morning dawned, there was more anxiety and more puzzling, more mental torture. The Boers were as much in evidence as ever!

Disappointment may be borne with a show of spirit when the inner machinery is well oiled, but the inhabitants of Ladysmith had no such source of fortitude. True, they had fared, if not sumptuously, at least practically, on horse-sausages, which were turned out wholesale from a factory for the benefit of the troops, and on fairly nourishing soup which was supplied in the same way; but of civilised food there was none. Eggs had now gone up to 36s. a dozen, and a diminutive and emaciated fowl could be purchased for 18s. These luxuries were for the elect. For the mass a varying dietary of horse and mule was obligatory. Vegetables were sold at a prohibitive price, and a case of whisky was raffled for and fetched £145, so that "Dutch courage" wherewith to meet their misfortune was unpurchasable.

Not till Sunday the 28th the fearful truth was learned, that Warren, after holding Spion Kop, had retired, and left the Boers in undisturbed occupation of their commanding position!

As all the latest events to the south were communicated to the garrison as fast as they were made known to the chief, the news of the capture of Spion Kop and the disappointing retirement therefrom was published in general orders. Blank faces turned from each other, that none should see the reflection of his own despondency. Intense had been the rapture of the anxious inhabitants when they had heard the far-away booming of the British guns, seen the splashing of British lyddite, watched the great spouts

Lord Roberts at the Cape

of smoke that spoke of tremendous activity and their possible salvation. Now their dismay was more than proportionate. After all their agony—silence. Silence, so far as they were concerned. Mystery, doubt, and agonising suspense—and now the news, the woeful news, that the second splendid effort to break through the imprisoning Boer girdle had failed!

Still the garrison was resolved to hold on to the last, preferring death by starvation or disease rather than surrender. The malodorous surroundings were borne with patience, the diminution of the supply of medicines, watched with pathetic resignation. Nevertheless an untold weariness crept over the unhappy sufferers, who spent their days huddled underground and dreading to expose themselves in the open lest they should be caught by a shell or “sniped” at by some Boer more enterprising than the rest. How they longed, how they prayed for the great hour! They believed in Buller; they knew he would come, they said to themselves. But when, O when? And echo answered—When?

LORD ROBERTS AT THE CAPE

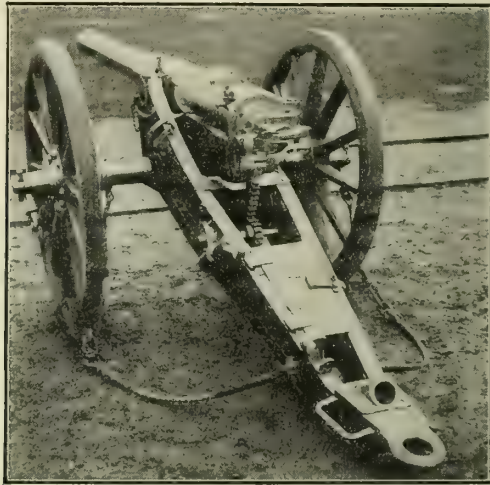
On the 10th of January Lord Roberts arrived. He was received by General Sir F. Forestier Walker on behalf of Sir Alfred Milner. All the ships in port were dressed, and there was immense excitement at the prospect of better things. Many recalled to mind the occasion of the last coming of the great little man, when, on the eve of a campaign to retrieve Majuba, he found that the British Government, unknown to him, had arranged peace on contemptible terms. At that time it was said he broke his sword in indignation at the betrayal to which he had been subjected, and vowed never again to serve under a British Government. Be this as it may—he had now come at the earnest call of his country, and all felt that his coming meant a turn in the wheel of fortune. After his arrival things began gradually to unfold themselves, and the promise of decisive movement was in the air.

Lord Roberts's decision to bring the Colonial volunteers to the support of the Imperial forces was acknowledged to be a great move. The Colonist's services were eminently to be desired, for he had taken the Boer measure. He knew him in all the complex windings of his sinuous, twisting nature. In some respects the Boer had been his lesson-book. From him he had learned the necessity to be a good shot, a smart horseman, and a long stayer. He followed the ins and outs of the Dutchman's war game, and could practise the art of dodging round kopjes and into dongas, hiding in scrub and disappearing from mortal ken at a moment's notice, with the zest and agility of a schoolboy playing at hide and seek, and with a certain enjoyment in the diamond-cut-diamond sort of exercise.

The Transvaal War

On the 26th of January General Brabant arrived at Queenstown to take over the command of the Colonial Division, and on the same day General Kelly Kenny, commanding the Sixth Division, occupied Thebus, a position on the railway between Middleburg and Stormberg Junction. This station is situated about ninety miles from Colesberg, around which General French so untiringly operated, and forty-five miles from Stormberg, the scene of General Gatacre's disaster.

On the 1st of February the City of London Volunteers landed. Immediately after their arrival at the Cape they were honoured by a visit from the great man who was about to control the destinies of

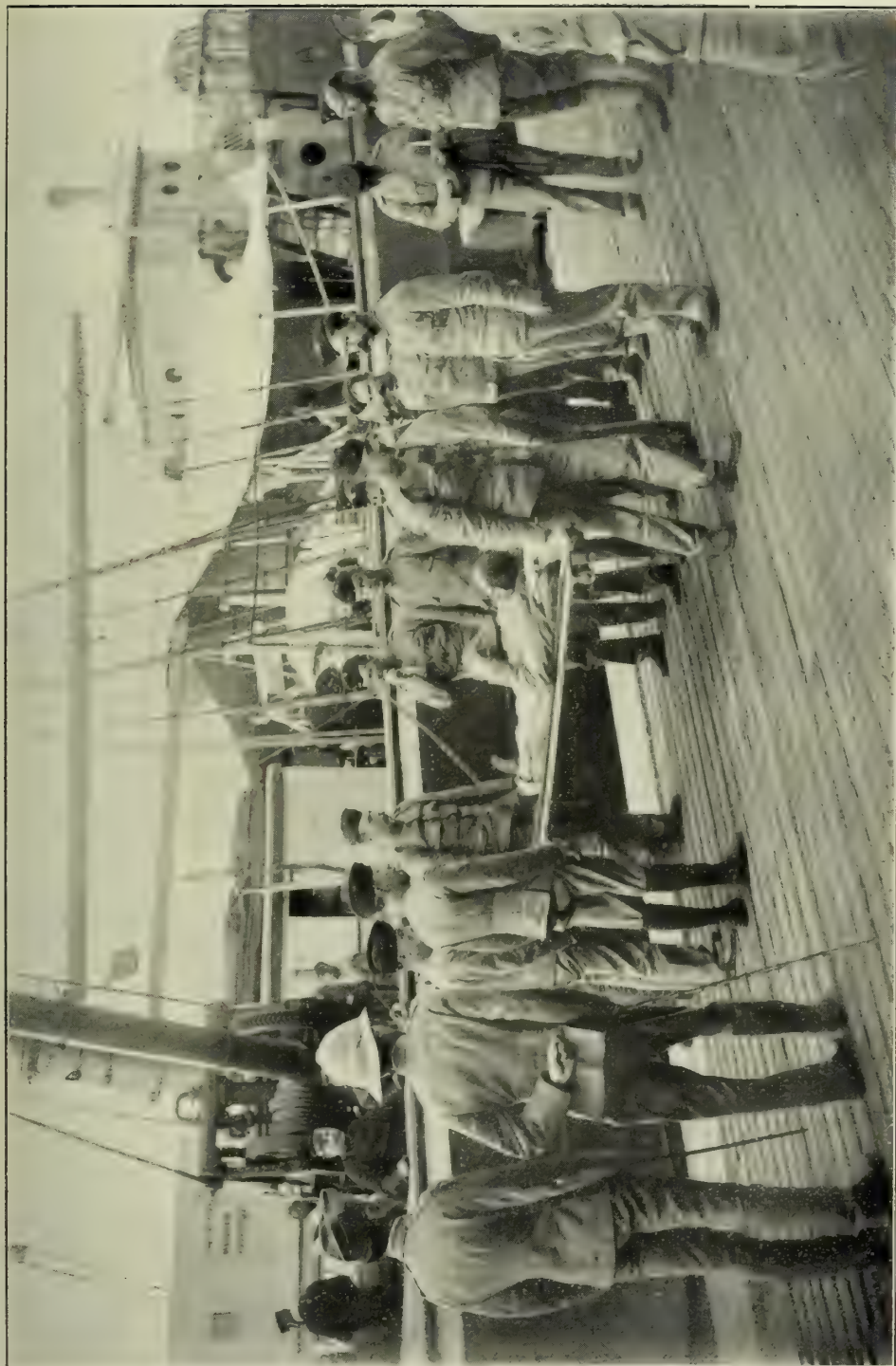


TYPE OF ARMS—NEW NAVAL 12-POUNDER FIELD-GUN.

(Photo, Cribb, Southsea.)

South Africa. Gracefully he welcomed them, and said how little it had been imagined in days gone by, the days when the Volunteer force had been established, that any of its members would come to take part in a war in South Africa. He expressed his belief that nothing was more calculated to benefit the army than employment together on service of all its component parts, and that these would learn to appreciate each other, and acquire a spirit of comradeship which would have far-reaching results. He reminded them that strangely enough the first Volunteers left home three hundred years ago to fight for the Dutch, and arrived just in time to save Flushing from the Spaniards. On this occasion they would take an equally brilliant part in establishing peace, order, and freedom in South Africa.

The members of the corps were delighted. Colonel Cholmondeley



ARRIVAL AT CAPE TOWN OF WOUNDED FROM NATAL.

Phot. by Hosking, Cape Town.

Lord Roberts at the Cape

expressed their thanks, and they all cheered right royally. They were burning to get to the front, and, in spite of the sudden change of temperature from British midwinter to tropical sunshine, their zeal to be up and doing was unabated. They waited at the Cape to be joined by the second detachment and receive their horses, after which they entrained for the western border, where they were so soon to distinguish themselves.

There was great satisfaction at the announcement that General Brabant would command the Colonial corps. The class of men enlisting in Brabant's Horse, the Imperial Horse, Bailey's Horse, and other of the South African mounted corps was a superior one. The volunteers were mostly well-to-do men, sons of farmers and Colonials who were residents in the country, and were intimately acquainted with its geography. Moreover, they were men and not striplings, and were averse from being commanded by young officers who were absolutely without South African experience.

It has been rumoured that the British officers and those of the irregular troops have not always been in accord. The fact is, that one is a master of discipline and the other a master of independence. The Colonial is accustomed to habits of complete self-reliance; he expects to be treated like an individual and not as a machine. Our military system is a machine-made system, and one which, unluckily for us, has been incapable of any of the smart plasticities which warfare with the Boers has demanded. Colonial troops will be led, but they won't be driven. They are composed of men of first-rate quality, but not men accustomed blindly to obey orders. The Colonist obeys because of the personal influence of a man or men whom he holds intellectually or morally in esteem, but the word discipline for sheer discipline's sake he is disinclined to understand. Among the ranks of the Colonials are many men of wealth and influence, men of high character and good education. These could not suddenly be treated in the same way as the British regulars, who, being gifted with more dare-devil courage than knowledge of the three R's, require to be welded together on a system. A tactician once asked the question—What is the difference between an army and a mob? and the general answered—"Discipline." It is discipline that converts a rowdy British youngster into the glorious British Tommy that he is. With the Colonial we have already the trained and independent man, and the system of give and take is the only system that can avert friction between men who, though brothers in blood, have, and always must have, the special idiosyncrasies attendant on their dissimilar forms of life.

Lord Roberts, recognising all this, with his usual diplomacy and sympathy for those who serve the Queen, decided to form a body-guard, to accompany him to the front, of Colonials, the troops to be

The Transvaal War

representative of all the corps—volunteers, irregulars, &c. The guard was to consist of Major Laing, an officer well versed and distinguished in Colonial matters, a lieutenant, two sergeants and corporals, and about forty picked troopers taken from the various irregular corps already at the front. The men of the corps were to continue to wear their own uniform, and merely to be distinguished by a badge. Preference in choosing the members of the guard was given to men of Colonial birth, good shots, riders, and scouts, who were well acquainted with all the peculiarities of Colonial life.

To further show his appreciation of the services of the Colonials, Lord Roberts appointed as extra aide-de-camp on his personal staff Colonel Bryon of the Australian Artillery. He also sent telegrams to the Governors of Victoria and New South Wales congratulating them on the spirit of patriotism in Australia, and expressing his appreciation of the useful and workmanlike troops that had been sent to assist in restoring peace, order, and freedom in South Africa.

At this time the following correspondence between the Presidents of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State and Lord Roberts was published at the Cape. It began with a joint despatch from Presidents Steyn and Kruger dated Blomfontein, February 3, stating :—

“We learn from many sides that the British troops, contrary to the recognised usages of war, have been guilty of destruction by burning and blowing up with dynamite farmhouses and devastating farms and goods therein, whereby unprotected women and children have often been deprived of food and shelter. This happens not only in places where barbarians are encouraged by British officers, but even in Cape Colony and in this State (Orange Free State), where white brigands come out from the theatre of war with the evident intention of carrying on general devastation without any reason recognised by the custom of war and without in any way furthering the operations. We wish earnestly to protest against such practices.”

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'P. J. B. Kruger'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'P' and a stylized 'J' and 'B'.

MR. KRUGER'S AUTOGRAPH

In reply Lord Roberts wrote :—

“I beg to acknowledge your Honours' telegram charging British troops with the destruction of property contrary to the recognised usages of war, and with brigandage and devastation. These charges are made in vague and general terms. No specific case is mentioned. No evidence is given. I have seen such charges made before now in the Press, but in no case which has come under my notice have they been substantiated. Most stringent instructions have been issued to British troops to respect private property so far as it is compatible with the conduct of military operations. All wanton destruction

Lord Roberts at the Cape

and injury to peaceful inhabitants are contrary to British practice and traditions, and will, if necessary, be vigorously repressed by me.

"I regret that your Honours should have seen fit to repeat the untrue statement that barbarians have been encouraged by British officers to commit depredations. In the only case in which a raid has been perpetrated by native subjects of the Queen, the act was contrary to the instructions of the British officer nearest the spot, and entirely disconcerted his operations. The women and children taken prisoners by the natives were restored to their home by the agency of the British officer in question.

"I regret to say it is the Republican forces which in some cases have been guilty of carrying on war in a manner not in accordance with civilised usage. I refer especially to the expulsion of loyal subjects of Her Majesty from their homes in the invaded districts because they refused to be commandeered by the invaders. It is barbarous to attempt to force men to take sides against their sovereign country by threats of spoliation and expulsion. Men, women, and children had to leave their homes owing to such compulsion. Many of those who were formerly in comfortable circumstances are now maintained by charity.

"That war should inflict hardships and injury on peaceful inhabitants is inevitable, but it is the desire of Her Majesty's Government and my intention to conduct this war with as little injury as possible to peaceful inhabitants and private property. I hope your Honours will exercise your authority to ensure that it is conducted in a similar spirit on your side."

Meanwhile the British Commander was rapidly maturing his plans. Troops were pouring into the Cape and mysteriously departing none knew whither. Great doings were in the air, and secret communications between Lord Roberts and the wily General French—communications which Boer spies endeavoured to intercept—promised that the splendid fastnesses hitherto enjoyed by the enemy would not much longer serve to keep him from the punishment that was his due.

CHAPTER VII

THE WONDER OF THE WORLD

"Forty years had I in my city seen soldiers parading,
Forty years as a pageant, till unawares the lady of this teeming and turbulent city,
Sleepless amid her ships, her houses, her incalculable wealth,
With her million children around her, suddenly,
At dead of night, at news from the south,
Incens'd struck with clinch'd hand the pavement.

A shock electric, the night sustain'd it,
Till with ominous hum our hive at daybreak pour'd out its myriads."

—WALT WHITMAN.

THE eyes of Europe, and indeed of the universe, turned upon the forces at war in Natal with amazement almost akin to awe. There, in the eve of the twentieth century, was presented a tenth wonder of the world! Where, among the states, principalities, and powers, could be found another example of an army being raised veritably from all points of the compass to serve the Mother Country? Whence in the history of heroic ages could be quoted the counterpart of spontaneous, simultaneous, exultant patriotism such as was brought forth by a few reverses to British arms? Here were men, brothers, whom we had never seen, whose names we had never heard, rushing to our side—influential citizens, judges, merchants, landowners in the distant dominions of the Queen—throwing over domestic comfort, ease, commercial advantage, political distinction, for the sheer desire to barter breath for fame, and to win laurels in the cause of the Empire. Our friends—the Powers—gazed and rubbed their eyes and marvelled! Our enemies—the Powers—gazed, rubbed their eyes, and—well! if they did not curse, they certainly trod warily and pondered! We were providing an object-lesson for eternity. The infinitesimal little island, the bird's-nest of the Little Englanders, was introducing to the nations her stalwart progeny—introducing with the easy pride of motherhood gigantic sons, all young and strong and well-grown, full of the vigour of youth and the finest traits of the parent stock—a martial multitude, clamouring to defend her in her hour of need! Yes, if our enemies—the Powers—did not curse, they walked warily and pondered!

They did wisely, for by the beginning of March the number of Colonial troops at the front was approximately as follows: Cape Colony, 15,000; Natal, 7000; Canada, 2820; Ceylon, 130; New



COLONEL W. D. OTTER.

Commanding the First Canadian Contingent.

The Wonder of the World

South Wales, 1800; Queensland, 810; South Australia, 340; West Australia, 230; Victoria, 500; Tasmania, 180; New Zealand, 730; India, 250; total, 29,790. This tremendous increase in the size of the Transvaal force was a magnificent spectacle for the world at large. While it constituted the greatest military concentration in the history of the Empire, it left the British possessions in India, Malta, Crete, Barbadoes, Bermuda, Ceylon, Hong-Kong, Gibraltar, and elsewhere, if not adequately, at least powerfully defended. For instance, in India alone we had still a superb British army. It was composed of forty-seven battalions of infantry, six regiments of cavalry, sixty-two batteries of artillery, not to mention the enormous Indian Army, of which the cavalry was styled by Lord Curzon "the finest cavalry in the world." Even then we were not at the end of our tether. Conscription was undreamt of. Our military resources had barely been tested. The display of loyalty to the British flag, love for the Mother Country, and an ardent desire to uphold her rights, had not been confined to Great Britain's larger colonies. Small contingents for South Africa had been offered by Jamaica and Trinidad and elsewhere, and these, though gratefully acknowledged, had been refused, mostly in cases where the contingents were not large enough to constitute a military unit, and there might have been trouble in the movement of the force.

The growth of Colonial offers of assistance from the time—the 10th of July—when Queensland sent an anticipatory telegram proposing military aid, it is interesting to follow. Two days later, the 12th of July, came a telegram from Lord Brassey at Victoria, saying that "offers have been received from Volunteers for service in South Africa." Five days passed. Then an offer of 300 men from the Malay States Guides arrived, the High Commissioner intimating, however, that he could not spare them. Three hundred Hausas from Lagos volunteered on the 18th of July. On the 21st of that month New South Wales offered 1860 officers, non-commissioned officers, and men. The offer of Hong-Kong on the 21st of September was followed by New Zealand's Parliamentary resolution to send a Transvaal Contingent. On the 5th of October Western Australia came forward, and on the 9th Tasmania offered her unit. On the 13th the offers of troops from South Australia and Canada were "gratefully accepted." Last, but not least, came the offer of assistance from India, and additional help from those whose aid had previously been given and acknowledged as invaluable.

Thus, by degrees, the whole concourse of Great Britain's best was gathered together, the flowers of her numerous flocks were drawn to a common centre by the tie of blood and the pride of it—drawn to a far quarter of the earth, there to demonstrate the crowning triumph of British colonisation. The long-talked-of consolidation of the

The Transvaal War

Anglo-Saxon race for the welfare and freedom of humanity was no longer an idealist's dream; it had become a living and a lasting reality!

FIRST CANADIAN CONTINGENT

Early in the century the spirit of loyalty was developed in Canada. From her first years, when Wolfe made Canada a colony of Great Britain, the colonists began to recognise their debt to the British Crown. The feeling of reverence and love for the Mother Country strengthened and grew with the strength and growth of Canada itself, till the sentiment of Imperialism, always silently existing, suddenly found almost passionate utterance in the month of October 1899.

What came to pass a great man had foreseen. Sir John Macdonald, who gauged aright the sentiment of the Canadians, described almost prophetically the expansion of that sentiment, and pointed out the developments that might be looked for in the future. In one of his pro-Confederation speeches he said:—

"Some are apprehensive that the fact of our forming this Confederation will hasten the time when we shall be severed from the Mother Country. I have no apprehension of that kind. I believe it will have the contrary effect. I believe that as we grow stronger, as we become a people able, from our union, our population, and the development of our resources, to take our position among the nations of the world, she will be less willing to part with us than now. I am strongly of opinion that year by year, as we grow in population and strength, England will more see the advantage of maintaining the alliance between British North America and herself. Does any one imagine that when our population, instead of 3,500,000 will be 7,000,000, as it will be ere many years pass, we would be one whit more willing than now to sever the connection with England? The Colonies are now in a transition state. Gradually a different colonial system is being developed, and it will become year by year less a case of dependence on our part, and of overruling protection on the part of the Mother Country, and more a case of healthy and cordial alliance. Instead of looking upon us as a merely dependent colony, England will have in us a friendly nation, a subordinate but still a powerful people, to stand by her in North America in peace or in war."

Many other prominent persons, Sir John Thompson, Sir Charles Tupper, Sir Wilfred Laurier, shared the same opinion, and confidently asserted that Great Britain had but to hold out her hand and the hand of Canada would go out to meet it with firm and cordial grasp.

Then came the hour and the opportunity. Canada acted exactly as Canada's greatest men had expected her to act. She did not jump to action, for the idea of participating in the active affairs of the Empire had scarcely dawned upon her, but, the opening once made, Canada lost no time in availing herself of it. Great things have small beginnings, and the grand movement which has astonished the universe commenced in a simple manner.

While the possibility of war drifted like a small cloud on the horizon, a certain Colonel Hughes, of Lindsay, Ontario, set to work to raise a volunteer regiment for possible service in South Africa. In September 1899 he openly expressed himself. In answer to energetic remonstrance he wrote, that "unless the Government of the Dominion showed itself patriotic enough to do its duty by the Imperial Government, he was justified in his action, the object of which was to assist in upbuilding the British Empire and rendering justice

First Canadian Contingent

to one's fellow-countrymen, even at great sacrifice, and that as little delay as possible should result on the outbreak of hostilities in enrolling a corps." The idea, to use the popular phrase, "caught on." All the notabilities of the Dominion put their heads together, with the result that, early as October 3, the Canadian Military Institute in Toronto proposed to offer a Canadian Contingent to the British Imperial Government, in the event of a war breaking out with the Boers. It was also suggested and carried unanimously, that whereas all the expenses of the Canadian Contingent sent to the aid of the British troops in the Crimean War had been borne by the British Government, the expenses of the Contingent it was now proposed to send to South Africa, should be provided by the Dominion of Canada, that the Canadian Government should train, arm, equip, transport, and pay the force raised, and, if necessary, pension those deserving it. The offer of a Canadian Contingent was accordingly made through the Government to the British Government, who accepted it with two reservations—First, that the force raised should consist of 1000 men only; Second, that half the expenses of the Contingent should be met by the Imperial Government. To this the Canadians consented under protest, declaring, however, that should any further assistance be required during the course of the war, they would be ready and glad to send it.

Thousands of volunteers offered their services, but only a limited number could be accepted. It was decided to allow each locality to have the honour of taking part in the patriotic movement, and the formation of companies was authorised as follows:—A Company, Manitoba and the North-West; B, London, Ontario; C, Toronto; D, Ottawa and Kingston; E, Montreal; F, Quebec; G, Fredericton and Prince Edward Island; H, Halifax.

The men were thus gathered from all parts of Canada, the smaller towns sending from three to seven representatives each, and the larger ones supplying some regulars from the city regiments, in addition to volunteers. The enrolling and equipping of these 1000 volunteers, scattered as they had been over 3500 miles of territory, was accomplished in little more than a fortnight—a wonderful feat in view of the pacific times enjoyed by the Colonials.

It was quite inspiring to note the general activity. All the Dominion displayed its loyalty in deeds as well as words. Men living in idleness and comfort, professional men of standing, family men with innumerable ties, came to the fore and volunteered their services; while employers assisted the splendid movement by offering facilities to those serving them who might care to enlist. Every soul insisted on taking his share in the Imperial doings. Those who could not volunteer united their efforts and showed their loyalty by showering gifts on the battalion. The officers and men of every company were presented at their own headquarters with a sum of money varying according to rank, but in each case of substantial value, as a contribution to their warlike needs. Every officer received from public subscriptions a field-glass, revolver, and \$125 in money. Privates were presented with a silver match-box and \$25. The Bank of Ottawa contributed \$1000 for the purchase of delicacies for the men on their sea-voyage. In addition to this generosity, firms of all kinds sent in their own manufacture, life insurances were effected on special terms for officers and men of the battalion covering compensation for partial disablement, and the telegraph and telephonic companies liberally agreed to transmit private messages for all connected with the Contingent free of charge.

The mobilisation and concentration at Quebec of the composite battalion was no mean undertaking, but it was accomplished by the 27th of October. On the following night a dinner to the officers was given, and later, a smoking concert.

The Transvaal War

On the 29th the special service battalion attended divine service, the Catholics at the Cathedral, the Roman Catholics at the Basilica. The sermon given at the Cathedral was a notable one, and served to mark the historical nature of the occasion. Among other things, the Rev. J. G. Scott expressed himself of sentiments that all might do well to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. He said: "What is the Empire of which we are a part? It is not a mere collection of subservient peoples adding to the revenue and importance of a small island to the north-west of Europe. No; it is much more than that. It is a vast federation of peoples of all nations, tongues, languages, and creeds joined together in 'liberty, equality, and fraternity,' by common laws and a common love to their real or their adopted mother. England and England's flag must remain the symbol of our common patriotism. But the British Empire, the Empire of the future, the Empire rising with the sun of a new century, is founded in deeper principles than mere sentimental devotion to the land of our fathers. The principle underlying it is the liberty and brotherhood and welfare of man. We conquer and advance. Wild lands come under our sway. Savage races are subjugated or turn to us for protection. But all with what result? With the result that the waste lands are cultivated, the hidden mines of the earth yield up their treasures, continents are spanned by vast railways and the bed of ocean by electric cables, with the result that the savage is brought under the yoke of civilisation, and religion, education, and commerce raise him almost to the level of a European. But this progress has not been, nor can it be, unaccompanied by difficulties. At the present time our race in its general advance is brought face to face with forces that retard, not merely the growth of the British Empire, but the principles of freedom and humanity which underlie it. The nineteenth century is confronted in South Africa with a remnant of the seventeenth. Our brethren, oppressed by an intolerable tyranny, cry to us for help, and we, a republic under a monarchical form, go to crush a despotism under the form of a republic."

This last phrase was a masterpiece, one that all who have enjoyed the liberty, fraternity, and equality of our republican empire can fully appreciate. Continuing, the preacher went on to say: "Surely, if we go forth firmly, fearlessly, and mercifully to fight in such a cause, we can feel, like Israel of old, that 'the Eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms, and that He will thrust out the enemy from before us.' And you, my brethren, who are privileged to go forth under the flag of our Queen and the Empire, are the representatives of a great people, formed of various creeds, and nationalities, and languages, but blended in a common law and a common love for the liberty which makes men—men. The call to arms from the Motherland has sent a thrill to the four corners of the earth. The Empire, which has been knit together by community of race, by commerce, by railways and by cables, is to be drawn now into an absolutely indissoluble bond by the voluntary sacrifice of blood and life on a common battlefield. No ordinary departure of troops to the front is yours. You are the pioneers of a new era in our history. The importance of this day is not to be measured, any more than was the importance of the great battle in the Plains hard by, according to numerical computation. We have taken a step, a step on the threshold of another century, which is destined in time to put an end to the distinction of Colony and Motherland, and will finally give us a voice in the conduct of the Empire. Surely, to those going forth as champions in a noble cause, I cannot do better than to commend to you individually the watchword of Israel's—nay, of England's strength, 'The Eternal God is thy refuge, 'and underneath are the everlasting arms.' There may come

First Canadian Contingent

moments to some of you, in the irksomeness of discipline, in the pause before the battle-charge, in the silence of lonely picket duty, or during sleepless nights on the hospital pallet, when the memory of the parting service in these hallowed walls—walls which, during this century, have seen many heroes arm at the call of duty—will come back to you with the comfort which even the bravest need, and you will feel that in life and death ‘the Eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.’ Then, like the knights of old, consecrate to-day your hearts and swords to God’s service, and you who are communicants draw near to the altar of God and receive the strength which comes from the Body and Blood of Christ. You are not a wild horde let loose in savage warfare, but Christian men armed for a great cause. Keep then your lives pure—pure as the memories of your Canadian home. Be sober, as men who can face danger without artificial courage. Let the talk at mess and in camp be clean, and above all remember to pay regularly the daily homage of prayer to your Heavenly Father. Do not be ashamed to confess Christ before men.”

These heart-stirring words found their echo in every breast—the great body of patriotic volunteers was thrilled through with the ambition to do great deeds in a great way, to go forth and write their names in blood, if need be, alongside of those of their brothers of the Anglo-Saxon race whose records loomed large and indelible upon the scrip of Time.

In the evening the Governor-General entertained the superior officers and staff at dinner, and on the following morning the last parade was held. Major-General Hutton, commanding the Canadian Militia, commenced his inspection at 11.30. At noon the Governor-General, the Premier, Sir Wilfred Laurier, and other members of the Cabinet arrived on the ground. His Excellency addressed the men as follows: “Colonel Otter, officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the Canadian Contingent, I congratulate you on the splendid appearance of your regiment on parade, and Canada may justly be proud of her representative troops. But, Colonel Otter, the force you command represents a great deal more than a serviceable regiment on parade. We are standing here upon historic ground, under the ramparts of the old city of Quebec, surrounded by celebrated battlefields, and in an atmosphere full of the glorious traditions of two great nations—nations who, respecting each other’s warlike qualities on many a hard-fought field, have now joined in common loyalty to their Queen and Empress. Your companies have been gathered from British Columbia to the Atlantic coast, from the settlers in the Rocky Mountains and the Far West, from Ontario and the Maritime Provinces, and from the old French families of Quebec. They represent the manhood of the Dominion from the west to the east, but, above all, they represent the spontaneous offer of the people of Canada, British born and French Canadian, to the Mother Country. The people of Canada have shown no inclination to discuss the quibbles of Colonial responsibility; they have only unmistakably asked that their loyal offers should be made known, and they rejoice in their gracious acceptance. In so doing surely they have opened a new chapter in the history of our Empire; they have freely made their military gift to an Imperial cause, to share the privations, and the dangers, and the glories of an Imperial army. They have insisted on giving vent to the expression of that sentimental Imperial unity which may, perhaps, hereafter prove more binding than any written Imperial constitution. The embarkation of your force, Colonel Otter, to-day will mark a memorable epoch in the history of Canada and the Empire. Of the success of your future we have no doubt; we shall watch your departure with very full hearts, and shall follow your movements with

The Transvaal War

eager enthusiasm. All Canada will long to see the Maple Leaf well to the front, and to give her Contingent a glorious welcome home again. And now, as the representative of Her Majesty, I wish you God speed and every success."

Lord Minto then called on the men to give three cheers for the Queen, which they did with all the zest of lusty Anglo-Saxon lungs.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier then addressed the regiment. He reminded them they were going to obey the call of duty, that their cause was the cause of justice, the cause of humanity and of civilisation. Men of our own race were being unjustly oppressed, and the troops were going forth in the interests of the Empire and of liberty. He rejoiced to see the alacrity with which Canadians had responded to the call and rushed to the aid of the great Empire of which all were so proud. He wished them God speed, and expressed his confidence that they would be an honour to themselves and to their native land.

Major-General Hutton impressively assured the troops that their honour was Canada's honour, that their renown was Canada's renown; and though strain and hardships might be great, they would remember that in the far-off Dominion thousands of men and women looked to the Royal Canadian Regiment to uphold the honour of their native land. French Canadians and English Canadians must recollect the responsibility that would rest upon their shoulders, and he knew they would acquit themselves well of their duties.

Then followed an address by the Hon. S. Parent, Mayor of Quebec. He read: "The citizens of Quebec offer you the most cordial welcome in this old fortress, so often stormed by war and tempest, whose inhabitants, from their earliest years, have been accustomed to the music of military bands, to the smell of powder and the smoke of battles. We are proud of the honour that has been done our city in its selection as the scene of the mobilisation of this select regiment which the Canadian people send to the assistance of our Mother Country. The presence in our midst of the representative of our Most Gracious Sovereign, His Excellency the Governor-General, and other dignitaries of the State, adds not only lustre and *éclat* to this day's ceremony, but gives to our proceedings a deeper and wider meaning. It was no vain appeal that was made to our valour and our loyalty, for along the way from Victoria to Halifax, a thousand picked men, representing the youth, physical strength, the discipline and the courageous daring of our people, freely volunteered to serve under the British flag. The people of various origin and different religious creeds that go to make up the population of this country are represented in your regiment, and now that we are, for the time being, assembled within the walls of the most French city of the New World, let us claim for the French-Canadian element a large share of the warm and spontaneous outburst of sentiments of loyalty to England which marked your triumphal passage from your homes to Quebec. No matter how diverse may be our origin and the languages that we speak, who is there that will dare to affirm that we have not all the qualities necessary for the making of a real nation? Who dare say, upon such an occasion as the present, that we are not all sincerely united and loyal towards the Canadian Dominion, and loyal to England which has given us so complete a measure of liberty? We French-Canadians have loyally accepted the new destinies that Providence provided for us upon the battlefield of 1759. Is it possible that anybody can have forgotten 1775 and 1812? On the summit of this proud rock of Quebec, rendered illustrious by Jacques Cartier and Champlain, behold, but a few steps from this place, the superb monument erected by an English Governor to the memory of Wolfe and of Montcalm! Why may we not make it the emblem and the symbol of our national unity? Let

First Canadian Contingent

us leave to each individual amongst us the privilege to retain, as a sweet souvenir worthy of a noble heart, the rose, the thistle, the fleur-de-lys, or the shamrock, and even the pot of earth that the Irish immigrant brings with him from under distant skies, and let us be united for the great and holy cause that we have in hand: the foundation of a great nation and the development of the boundless resources of a rich and immense country. Our best wishes accompany you in the long journey, at the end of which you will, no doubt, find glory as well as suffering, privations, and perhaps even heroic sacrifices. When you will be under the burning sun of Africa, you may be sure that our hearts will follow you everywhere, and that in our long winter evenings you will be the principal object of our fireside talk and solicitude. Be quite sure, too, that this Canada of ours will watch with a maternal care over the loved ones that you leave behind you, and who, in parting with you, are making so great and generous a sacrifice. May the God of battles crown your efforts! May He preserve you in the midst of danger! And may He bring you back safe and sound to the beloved shores of your fatherland!"

Never was more impressive scene, and even the stoutest warriors among the audience were thrilled with the consciousness of the solemnity of the moment, the sacredness of their future duty. Colonel Otter, who was much moved, replied as a soldier—briefly, but to the point. He thanked all around for their goodwill, and expressed his confidence that the Canadian Contingent would do its duty and do honour to the land of its birth.

The list of the principal officers was as follows:—

To command—Lieut.-Colonel W. D. Otter, Canadian Staff, A.D.C. to His Excellency the Governor-General. To be Major and second in command—Lieut.-Colonel L. Buchan, Royal Canadian Regiment. To be Major—Lieut.-Colonel O. C. C. Pelletier, Canadian Staff. To be Adjutant—Major J. C. M'Dougall, Royal Canadian Regiment. To be Quartermaster—Capt. and Brevet-Major S. J. A. Denison, Royal Canadian Regiment. To be Medical Officers—Surgeon-Major C. A. Wilson, 3rd Field Battery, C.A.; Surgeon-Major E. Fiset, 89th Batt. To be attached for Staff duty—Major L. G. Drummond, Scots Guards, Military Secretary to His Excellency the Governor-General. A Company (British Columbia and Manitoba).—To be Captain—Capt. M. G. Blanchard, 5th Regt. C.A. Major H. M. Arnold, 90th Batt.; Capt. A. E. Hodkins, Nelson R. Co.; Lieut. S. P. Layborn, R.C.R.I. B Company (London)—Major Duncan Stuart, 26th Batt.; Capt. J. C. Mason, 10th Batt.; Capt. J. M. Ross, 22nd Batt.; Second Lieut. R. H. M. Temple, 48th Highlanders. C Company (Toronto)—Capt. R. K. Barker, Q.O.R.; Lieut. J. C. Ogilvie, R.C.A.; Lieut. W. R. Marshall, 13th Batt.; Lieut. G. S. Wilkie, 10th Batt. D Company (Ottawa and Kingston)—Major S. M. Rogers, 43rd Batt.; Capt. W. T. Lawless, G.G.F.G.; Lieut. R. G. Stewart, 43rd Batt.; Lieut. A. C. Caldwell, 42nd Batt. E Company (Montreal)—Capt. A. H. Macdonell, R.C.R.I.; Capt. C. K. Fraser, 53rd Batt.; Lieut. A. E. Swift, 8th Batt.; Lieut. A. Laurie, P. of W. R. F Company (Quebec)—Capt. J. E. Pelletier, 65th Batt.; Capt. H. A. Panet, R.C.A.; Lieut. L. Leduc, R.C.R.I.; Lieut. E. A. Pelletier, 55th Batt. G Company (New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island)—Major W. A. Weeks, Charlottetown Engineers; Capt. F. C. Jones, 3rd Regt. C.A.; Lieut. J. H. Kaye, R.C.R.I.; Second Lieut. C. W. W. M'Lean, 8th Hussars. H Company (Halifax)—Capt. H. B. Stairs, 66th Batt.; Capt. H. E. Burstall, R.C.A.; Lieut. R. B. Willis, 66th Batt.; Second Lieut. J. C. Oland, 63rd Batt. Machine-Gun Section—Lieut. and Capt. A. C. Bell, Scots Guards, A.D.C. to the Major-General commanding the Canadian Militia.

The Transvaal War

The following officers were attached to the Royal Canadian Regiment for whatever duty might be allotted to them in connection with the campaign: Lieut.-Colonel F. L. Lessard, Royal Canadian Dragoons; Lieut.-Colonel C. W. Drury, A.D.C., Royal Canadian Artillery; Major R. Cartwright, Royal Canadian Regiment; Capt. W. Forester, Royal Canadian Dragoons. Medical officer—Capt. A. B. Osborne, C.A.M.S. (provisional).

By five o'clock in the afternoon all was over. The great ship *Sardinian*, with slow dignity, as though conscious of the gallant burden she was bearing to battle, sailed out into the great immensity of sea and sky. Cheers rent the air, tears—the tears not of personal grief, but of sympathetic patriotism—dimmed every eye. Many sorrowed, but many more were overwhelmed with sheer joy and pride to see this goodly throng going forth to do martial deeds, and bring back laurels to crown the land that Wolfe had made glorious. Slowly and with precision the minute guns boomed from the Citadel, loudly, the bands played the well-loved tunes, the "Maple Leaf" and "God Save the Queen." Swiftly now sped the *Sardinian*, flaunting her gay decorations, and bearing on the bosom of the water a thousand of Canada's best, a thousand brave hearts and true.

THE SECOND CANADIAN CONTINGENT

After the departure of the first Contingent the loyalty of Canada continued to increase. Every incident of the war was carefully watched and discussed, the great deeds that were on foot found lavish appreciation. At numerous meetings which took place in various parts of Canada the spirit of the country was described by such declarations as: "We, too, are loyal Britons, and our patriotism is at its best when our country needs us most."

On November 7th Canada made the offer to the British Government of a second Contingent for South Africa, and on December 18th Sir Wilfred Laurier received a cablegram from Mr. Joseph Chamberlain accepting the offer. As one of the Canadian Ministry afterwards said, "It did not take much more than five minutes for the Cabinet to decide that the Hon. F. W. Borden, Minister of Militia, should immediately instruct his officers at the Militia Department to go on with the preparations for sending the second Contingent." The fact was that most of the details had been ready for a month and more. The Minister of Militia had early come to the conclusion that a second Contingent of Canadians should be gathered together in the form of cavalry or mounted infantry and artillery.

The first to be given a chance of enlisting for South Africa were the Mounted Police. Forty-eight hours later steps were taken towards recruiting 200 Prairie Cowboys, men who could ride and shoot as well as any cavalymen in the world, and who are accustomed to subsisting on the scantiest of rations. Next came the Royal Canadian Dragoons, regulars, who were mounted on well-trained horses, and so well drilled as to make it possible for every man of them to instruct the less trained recruits during the voyage. The Boers having a healthy horror of the lance as a cavalry weapon, it was decided that half at least of Canada's cavalry should be given this arm.

It was considered that the Cowboys, and such "Plainsmen of the West" as Herchmer's Horse, *broncho busters* who had never been conquered by man or horse, would be specially valuable in the style of warfare affected by the Boers. With nerves of steel and thews of wire, they could speak without boasting of their capacity for putting in thirty-six hours consecutively in the saddle, and for living "on the smell of an oiled rag."

Second Canadian Contingent

Ardent volunteers who had failed to get a place in the first Contingent now rushed forward from every side. The sole disappointment was, that only a limited number could be accepted, and those must all be mounted men or artillery.

The wild enthusiasm aroused by the brave and splendid work of that portion of the first Canadian Contingent which was with Colonel Pilcher in South Africa, and the inspiring accounts given by the correspondent of the *Toronto Globe*, resulted in more volunteering, and a third Contingent could easily have been raised, even after the rigorous medical examination had rejected numbers.

The people of Canada responded nobly to the call for funds to provide for the families of their volunteers on service in South Africa, the large amounts subscribed by the Banks of Montreal and British North America, followed by donations of 15,000 dollars by the Canadian Pacific Railway and 2000 dollars by Holsen's Bank, having served to stimulate action in this direction. The City Council of Toronto insured for 1000 dollars the lives of all the 123 men they had sent to form part of the second Contingent.

On January 19, the Dominion Government, in a house which cheered itself hoarse in response to patriotic speeches, decided to offer, if required, 12,000 men to the Imperial Parliament for service in South Africa. Lord Strathcona meantime, at his own expense, raised a mounted battalion for service, which was to be ready to sail on February 10 for South Africa, the War Office having given their consent to the formation of the corps. The matter was placed in the hands of the Hon. Dr. Borden, Canadian Minister of Militia and Defence, who was given a free hand to recommend officers, organise and equip the corps, Lord Strathcona reserving only the right to reject or confirm his decisions.

The following officers left for the front at the end of January: Officers of D Battery—Major W. G. Hurdman, Capt. D. J. V. Eaton; Lieutenants, first section, T. W. Vantuyl; second section, J. M'Crea; third section, E. W. B. Morrison. Officers of E Battery—Major G. H. Ogilvie; Capt. R. Costigan; Lieutenants, first section, W. F. Murray; second section, A. T. Ogilvie; third section, W. G. Good. Officers attached for duty—Captain H. J. Uniacke; Adjutant, Captain H. C. Thatcher; Medical Officer, Surgeon-Major A. Worthington; Veterinary Officer, Veterinary-Major Massie. These were followed by Regimental Staff Commander Lieut.-Colonel Herchmer; Adjutant Lieut. Montague Baker; Transport Officer, Lieut. Eustace; Quartermaster, Captain Allan; Medical Officer. Surg.-Capt. Devine; Veterinary Officer, Lieut. R. Riddell. In command of squadrons, Majors Howe and Sanders; Captains Cuthbert and Macdonnell; Lieutenants Begin, Davidson, Wroughton, Cosby, Chalmers, Taylor, and Inglis.

When the mounted section of the second Canadian Contingent, numbering eighty men, started, some twelve extra men were invited to volunteer. To meet the demand no less than 400 applicants, many of them men of independent means, instantly came forward. Here was a remarkable proof of martial spirit, of devotion to the cause of the Mother Country. Vanity some said it was. Any way, it was a vanity fringing on the sublime.

It is interesting to note, that before the gallant members of the second Contingent left for Halifax they were presented with guidons by Lady Minto, the gifts being inscribed with the motto of the Elliot clan—"Wha daur meddle wi' me." This delicate mark of attention was highly appreciated by the men.

Early in February the Mounted Bushmen's Corps of 300 men and horses started for the Cape. All the Canadians, volunteers it must be remembered,

The Transvaal War

were picked men from all parts of the Dominion, and with them were scouts from British Columbia, who, for the most part, were recruited from the Mounted Police of the North-West and from Cowboys. Being about the smartest riders and best shots in the world, it was felt that they would distinguish themselves in the war game as played by the Boers.

Among those at the front prominently connected with Canada was Captain Kirkpatrick, Royal Engineers, who was attached to the staff of Sir Redvers Buller. This officer is a graduate of the Royal Military College, Kingston, and on leaving that institution received a commission in the Royal Engineers. When the war broke out, Captain Kirkpatrick was ordered from Malta to South Africa, where he commanded the Fortress Company of the Royal Engineers. Major Denison, a prominent officer in the Royal Canadian Infantry, who had personal charge of the recruiting for the first Canadian Contingent, and was appointed quartermaster to the battalion at Quebec, had the honour in January of being appointed aide-de-camp on the staff of Lord Roberts.

Another of the patriotic band was Colonel Girouard (the French Canadian of Egyptian fame), who assisted Lord Kitchener and the Engineers in marvellous operations along the line of rail. This officer has achieved a glorious reputation, one which has been declared to be a closer bond between French Canada and Great Britain than any words. Another honoured Canadian, who was mortally wounded in the attack near Spearman's Camp on the 20th of January, was Captain Hensley (Dublin Fusiliers). This gallant officer was born at Charlottetown and educated at King's College, Windsor, whence he passed into the Royal Military College.

Major-General Hutton, commanding the Canadian Militia, early in the year was selected for special service in South Africa. No better officer could have been chosen. He had ample experience of the subject in hand, as he himself stated in speaking to the Canadian Contingent before their departure: "It was my lot to have seen two campaigns in South Africa, including the campaign against the Boers in 1882. It was also—I was going to say my privilege—it was certainly not my pleasure—to have been at Pretoria at the time the present Convention was made; and I therefore know their leaders, and a little something—I may say almost too much—of South Africa and the Transvaal, and therefore I recognise perhaps more clearly than many of you do the very great difficulties and the dangers which our Contingent and the Imperial troops in South Africa are exposed to.

STRATHCONA'S HORSE

Strathcona's Horse, consisting of 530 men and 560 horses, was commanded by Colonel Steele of the North-West Mounted Police. He is regarded as an ideal officer for a scouting force, and his men were all picked men, the cream of the expert riders and riflemen of the Dominion. Morally and physically they were declared to be the best soldiers that have ever been enrolled in Canada. Their mounts were small shaggy bronchos, but sturdy long stayers. In regard to Lord Strathcona's timely generosity it is impossible to say enough—the general appreciation of his splendid and patriotic act is expressed in the following resolution, which was adopted by the Executive Committee of the British Empire League in Canada: "That the Executive Committee of the British Empire League in Canada has heard with unqualified satisfaction of the magnificent undertaking of Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, a Vice-President of this League, to raise, equip, and support, at his entire expense, a corps

Strathcona's Horse

of mounted troops composed of Canadians for service for the Empire in the South African war, and desires to place on record its enthusiastic appreciation of his patriotic munificence, and is certain that his work will yet further convince the rest of the Empire of Canada's devotion to the cause." Speaking of this noble promoter of his country's weal, Lieutenant Cooper, Q.V.R., said: "Generously has the British Empire done by Lord Strathcona, and generously and freely has Lord Strathcona done by the Empire. Under the ægis of the Union Jack in Scotland, Donald Alexander Smith spent the first eighteen years of his life. In 1838 he entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and learned the intricacies of North American trade in Labrador and the North-West. In later years he took a prominent part in the organisation of the Canadian Government in the newly-acquired Rupert's Land, and was intimately connected with the early official days of Manitoba and the North-West Territories. After representing Montreal for two terms in the Dominion Parliament, he was appointed Canadian High Commissioner in London, England, a position which he still fills to the satisfaction of the Canadian people. In 1897 he was raised to the peerage as Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal of Glencoe and Montreal."

The force, equipped after the manner of other mounted troops, and not armed with lances, was paid by Lord Strathcona until it landed in South Africa, when it was taken over by the Imperial Government. As in the case of the Contingents from the various Colonies, the officers of the corps were appointed as follows: S. B. Steele, gent., Canadian North-West Mounted Police, to be Lieut.-Colonel, with the temporary rank of Lieut.-Colonel in the army. To be Majors, with the temporary rank of Major in the army: Lieut. R. C. Laurie, Canadian Militia Reserve of Officers; R. Belcher, Inspector Canadian North-West Mounted Police; A. M. Jarvis, Inspector Canadian North-West Mounted Police; A. E. Synder, Inspector Canadian North-West Mounted Police. D. M. Howards, Canadian North-West Mounted Police, to be Captain, with the temporary rank of Captain in the army. To be Lieutenants, with the temporary rank of Lieutenant in the army: Major G. W. Camden, Canadian Militia; Captains R. M. Courtney, Canadian Militia; J. J. Macdonald, Canadian Militia; E. F. Mackie, Canadian Militia; Lieutenants T. E. Pooley, Canadian Militia; R. H. B. Magee, Canadian Militia Reserve of Officers; Second Lieutenant P. Fall, Canadian Militia; F. L. Cartwright, Inspector Canadian North-West Mounted Police; A. E. Christie, Inspector Canadian North-West Mounted Police; J. E. Leckie, Graduate Royal Military College, Kingston, Canada; A. W. Strange, gent., late Canadian Militia. Lieutenant M. P. Cotton, Canadian Militia, to be Lieutenant for Machine-Gun Detachment, with the temporary rank of Lieutenant in the Army. W. Parker, Canadian North-West Mounted Police, to be Quartermaster, with the temporary rank of Lieutenant in the army. C. B. Keenan, gent., M.D., to be Medical Officer, with the temporary rank of Captain. Dr. M'Millan of Brandon was appointed Veterinary Surgeon for the Strathcona Horse. His assistant was Mr. Millican, of Rapid City, Manitoba.

The regiment was recruited from a territory covering a million square miles, some men having travelled from Yukon and the Peace River district in order to enlist. Many distinguished men were among them. In one troop were to be found Mr. Beresford (formerly a Naval officer), cousin of the Marquis of Waterford; Mr. Warren, son of Colonel Warren, R.H.A.; Mr. Shaw, son of a Baronet; Mr. O'Brien, a kinsman of Lord Inchiquin; Hon. Mr. Cochrane, son of the now notable Lord Dundonald; and Lord Seymour. Colonel Steele

The Transvaal War

(N.W.M.P.), in command of the corps, is a son of a Captain in the Royal Navy. He was born in Canada, and is noted for his bravery and devotion to duty. Major Belcher, a notable swordsman and lancer, was for some years in the 9th Lancers. The troops received an enthusiastic send off, and multitudes gathered together to do honour to the latest addition of Great Britain's army. Several beautiful guidons were presented to the corps by the ladies of Ottawa. Each was made of crimson silk, with a broad white stripe through the centre, on which was embroidered in crimson letters, "Strathcona's Horse." On the upper crimson bar was Lord Strathcona's motto, "Perseverance," done in crimson on a white garter. Above the garter was a Baron's coronet and tiny brown beaver on a green maple leaf. On the lower crimson bar was the squadron's designation.

NEW SOUTH WALES

New South Wales fell into line with the other Australasian Colonies, and decided to send a military force for service with the Imperial army in South Africa.

The New South Wales Lancers, who had been in training at Aldershot, were the first to start. They were then about to return home, but were stopped *en route*, and proceeded to the Cape. Of their number some few refused to serve and went home, but on arrival many offered to return to the front. The rest gave satisfactory reasons for being unable to do so. Subsequently another Contingent was sent, and also the Bushmen Corps, at least 1000 strong. It was composed of men who could ride well, shoot splendidly, and were accustomed to camping out and roughing it in pursuit of their usual vocations. It must be noted that this was not the first time that New South Wales had come to the assistance of the Mother Country. A force went to Egypt in the earlier Soudan wars, when one man was wounded. Some discontent at that time was shown owing to the troops not being allowed to go to the front. On this occasion they were to serve and fare as the Imperial troops, and to be considered as such while in the field.

Each Contingent was composed of—1st, N.S.W. Lancers; First Australian Horse; N.S.W. Artillery; Mounted Rifles; Infantry, who, being good horsemen, were subsequently mounted by the Imperial Government. 2nd Contingent consisted of three Mounted Rifle units of 125 men each, one unit of Australian Horse of 100 men (475), one Battery of Artillery—18 officers, 175 men, 140 horses (629). The total of the New South Wales troops at the front in February amounted to 1331 men.

Though not at first very enthusiastic in expressions of patriotism, New South Wales soon became strong in deeds. Enthusiasm became epidemical. Mr. Lyne, the Premier, threw himself into the movement, and rapidly pushed forward the arrangements, and did all in his power to move in sympathy with the patriotic feelings of the Colony, which were daily growing more ardent. As a practical expression of the intensity of their patriotism, the citizens arranged and subscribed for the despatch of 500 expert rough-riders and Bush marksmen, while the New South Wales Government assisted by supplying arms and ammunition.

The volunteers were all part, or had formed part, of the land forces. The only actual *regular* regiment, as understood by us, was the artillery, a small company of Submarine Mining Engineers, 27; Army Service Corps, 10; and Army Medical Staff, 11. All the rest were partially paid or volunteers. The men

New South Wales

came from the whole country, and were men who were serving in the various corps either as volunteers or partially paid troops. All the infantry corps were volunteers—all cavalry regiments and some of the field and garrison artillery were partially paid troops, and were called regulars, though not on the permanent staff. The officers of the Contingents were—1. Captain C. F. Cox, N.S.W. Lancers, Major Bridges, N.S.W. Artillery, Captain Legge, General Staff N.S.W. Inf; 2. Major and Brevet Lieut.-Colonel Thomas Samuel Parrott, V. D. Corps of Engineers, an officer who served in 1885 with the Australian Contingent in the Soudan. Colonel Sydenham Smith com. Artillery; Major J. H. Plunkett Murray, com. 8th Inf. (Union Regiment); Captain and temporary Major P. T. Owen, General Staff; Staff officer for Engineer services, Captain L. H. Kyngdon, N.S.W. Regt. R.A.; Captain A. P. Popham Luscombe; N.S.W. Regt. R.A.A., Captain Henry P. Ramsay Copeland. Reserve of officers—Captain R. St. Julien Pearce; N.S.W. Art. (Field), Lieutenant R. S. Hay Blake Jenkins; N.S.W. Regt. R.A.A., Lieutenant C. F. Bracen, N.S.W. Art. (garrison). 1st Aus. (Vol.) Horse unit—1st Lieut. R. R. Thompson, Permanent Staff, with rank Captain; 2nd Lieutenant J. F. Moore Wilkinson, 1st Aus. Horse (Vol.), with rank 1st Lieutenant; 1st Lieutenant Keith Kinnaird Mackellar, 5th Inf. (Vol.) Regt.; Lieutenant B. J. Newmarch, N.S.W.A.M.C.; Lieutenant J. A. Dick, N.S.W.A.M.C.; Lieutenant A. H. Horsfall, N.S.W. A.M.C. Additional officers—Dr. A. MacCormick, to be Consulting Surgeon, hon. rank Major; Dr. R. Scot-Skirving, to be Consulting Surgeon, hon. rank Major; Dr. W. R. Cortis, rank Captain.; N. R. Howse, rank Lieutenant. Chaplains—Church of England—Rev. H. J. Rose, hon. rank Major; Rev. Patrick Fagan, hon. rank Captain.

The first Contingent reached Cape Town (from London) on November 2, 1899. The second Contingent started on January 17th and 18th in three transports; these, while in dock, had to be watched, as some Boer sympathisers were suspected of wishing to set fire to them. Nevertheless there were most remarkable demonstrations of loyalty on all sides, and the troops went off in high feather, having been previously addressed by Mr. Lyne in the following stirring speech: "I wish to tell you that every man and woman in this country is not so proud of anything as of you. You are not enlisting in the ordinary sense of the term, in that you are volunteering to serve with the British troops in the interests of the Empire. You are certain to meet a foe such as Great Britain has not met for some considerable time, and I feel we shall all be proud of your deeds. It is admitted that you are particularly useful, knowing bush life and being able readily to seize commanding points. Great Britain is finding that her Colonies form a valuable nursery ground, and we, on our part, are prepared to supply Great Britain with a force which is rapidly becoming a powerful adjunct of the British arms. You will be placed where you must show energy and determination, and must manifest pluck and courage, and we believe that you will bring back as a reward a wide recognition that our arms have been of service to the Empire. You will make a name for us such as rarely falls to the lot of a youthful country. You will show the world that the Empire is united, and that we are prepared to defend her and our homes if the necessity arises. We in Australia wish you God-speed, and every heart here beats in accord with every loyal heart in South Africa. I can only add, for those who may fall, that their memories will be revered, and you depart knowing that the loved ones of those yielding their lives will be tended by a generous Government and a generous public. Again I wish you God-speed, and may you return covered with all honour."

The Transvaal War

On the 19th of January the Premier received the following cable: "Her Majesty's Government learn with great satisfaction of the despatch of the Contingent and the patriotic feeling in New South Wales. The Queen commands me to express her thanks for these renewed expressions of loyalty.

"CHAMBERLAIN."

VICTORIA

The Victorian Contingent started off with the same flourish of trumpets and the same outbursts of popular feeling which had accompanied all the Transvaal Contingents. There was a mixture of song and shout, of sorrow and tears. The weather was unchangeably splendid; the city of Melbourne was thronged with visitors to witness the unusual sight, the crowd being augmented by numerous Tasmanians who journeyed across the straits to get a last glimpse at the brave band of warriors as they started on their voyage. Lord Brassey gave a short address, and in the name of the Queen wished them God-speed.

FIRST VICTORIAN CONTINGENT FOR SOUTH AFRICA.—Nominal Roll of Officers of the Victorian Contingent for service in South Africa, sent in accordance with the cablegram of the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies of 4th October 1899: Major G. A. Eddy, Captain (Medical Staff) W. F. Hopkins, Lieutenant T. M. M'Inerney, Lieutenant H. W. Pendlebury, Lieutenant A. J. N. Tremearne. Mounted Infantry Unit—Captain M'Leish, Lieutenant and Adjutant Salmon, Lieutenant Thorn, Lieutenant Chomley, Lieutenant Staughton, Lieutenant Roberts, Veterinary-Captain Kendall.

The following officers were attached for instruction in accordance with the cablegram of the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated 27th October 1899: Colonel J. C. Hoad, Lieutenant-Colonel C. E. E. Umphelby, Captain G. J. Johnston, Captain J. H. Bruche. Transport Officer for service with troops for South Africa on board s.s. *Medic*—Lieutenant-Commander W. J. Colquhoun.

SECOND VICTORIAN CONTINGENT FOR SOUTH AFRICA (two companies of mounted infantry).—Nominal Roll of Officers who embarked on s.s. *Euryalus* on 13th January 1900 for service in South Africa: Colonel T. Price, Captain D. H. Jenkins, Lieutenant T. H. Sergeant, Lieutenant T. F. Umphelby, Lieutenant G. O. Bruce, Lieutenant A. A. Holdsworth, Lieutenant M. T. Kirby, Lieutenant E. O. Anderson, Lieutenant T. A. Umphelby, Lieutenant E. S. Norton, Lieutenant R. S. R. S. Bree, Lieutenant and Adjutant J. L. Lilley, Major (Medical Staff) A. Honman, Chaplain Rev. F. W. Wray, Veterinary-Captain H. S. Rudduck. Officer attached for special service with Army Service Corps: Lieutenant A. J. Christie.

In addition to these Contingents the Colony contributed 250 Bushmen, making in all up to the month of April, 751; officers, 46.

Among the officers of the Victorian Contingent were some whose careers were particularly interesting:—

Lieut.-Colonel Charles Edward Ernest Umphelby was forty-six years of age, and a native of Victoria. He commanded the V.R.A.A. He joined the Militia Garrison Artillery at Warrnambool on the 20th June 1884; in March 1885 was appointed lieutenant in the Permanent Artillery, being promoted to be captain on the 1st January 1888. In August 1891 he was promoted to be major, and in June 1897 to the rank of lieutenant-colonel. In addition to commanding the artillery he also commanded the Western District Garrison Artillery. He was sent to England by the Victorian Government in 1889

New Zealand

to undergo courses of instruction, and while there was attached to the staff of Major-General Clarke. He passed through various artillery courses, including the long course at Woolwich and Shoeburyness.

Captain George Jamieson Johnston is a Victorian native, and is thirty-one years of age. He is an officer of the Field Artillery Brigade, which is commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Kelly. Captain Johnston was appointed lieutenant on the 11th January 1889, and was promoted to be captain on the 1st July 1895. He is well known as a straight and regular follower of the Melbourne Hounds.

Captain Julius Henry Bruche was born on the 6th March 1873, and educated at the Scotch College, Melbourne. His first experience of military work was in the ranks, and as an officer in the cadet corps, under Major W. Whitehead. After leaving the Scotch College cadets he was appointed to the senior cadets, and from them was transferred to the 1st Battalion Infantry Brigade as a lieutenant on 15th May 1891. Whilst in the 1st Battalion he passed the examination for captain, "distinguished in all subjects." He was appointed permanent adjutant of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Infantry Brigade on the 18th July 1898, and was promoted to the position of captain on the 17th February 1899, after passing the examination for regular officers, and going through a course of musketry and Maxim machine-gun, obtaining an officer's extra certificate, and a certificate as qualified as instructor of the Maxim machine-gun. Captain Bruche is a barrister and solicitor, but gave up his profession to join the permanent staff of the Victorian forces.

It may here be mentioned that Victoria has the distinction of being the birthplace of Dr. Robert Andrew Buntine, who was mentioned for bravery at the battle of Glencoe in Sir George White's despatches. Dr. Buntine was born on the 13th of November 1869. He matriculated in the Melbourne University with honours, and at once entered upon his medical course, where he acquitted himself with some distinction, for although close upon a hundred students entered their curriculum with him, only five (and he was one of them) passed consecutively all their examinations with honours. In 1890 he graduated with honours, and took his M.B., Ch.M. degrees. He then became one of the resident surgeons of the Melbourne Hospital for a year. After that, and the hard work of the University, he decided upon a year's travel. Accordingly, he travelled first in South Africa, and then in Great Britain for some months, visiting many interesting historical spots, and finally returning to South Africa, where he bought a practice in partnership with Dr. Currie, of Pietermaritzburg, Natal. Both are surgeons in the army, Dr. Buntine being surgeon to the Volunteers, and Dr. Currie to the Carabineers.

NEW ZEALAND

On the 21st of October, the anniversary of Trafalgar, Wellington was very early astir. Great were her preparations to commemorate the departure of her Contingent—the first Contingent to embark from the Colonies. Bunting began to break out before breakfast, and town and shipping were soon fluttering with flags. In the streets groups were congregating at a time when people are usually given up to business, and uniforms everywhere dotted the thoroughfare. Large numbers of volunteers came in from the country, some travelling all night, and there was a turn out of local forces amounting to 1500.

The march through the town began at 1.20 P.M. It was an inspiring sight, and one that all wished to bear in memory. The road at intervals was so dotted with cameras, that one humourist in the ranks was heard to remark that

The Transvaal War

this was the "real original March of the Camera Men." The crowds thickened and enthusiasm increased. Jervois Quay, the broadest avenue in the city, as well the open land abutting on it, was thronged from end to end. All the roofs commanding a view were lined, the steamers at the wharves were packed even to the rigging, and the long breastwork along the quay was crammed to suffocation.

Here the passage for the Contingent was kept by a double row of volunteers. The weather had been frowning and gusty, but no sooner had the Contingent formed up in front of a temporary stand projecting from the breastwork, on which Lord Ranfurly, the Governor, Lady Ranfurly and suite were accommodated, than the sun burst forth resplendent while the wind gently lulled. Speeches were made, followed by pathetic leave-takings of friends and relatives. At the last moment so great was the crush that some of the men were cut off from the rest, and had afterwards to struggle to the steamer as best they could.

As the big vessel slowly steamed off, cries of farewell, shouts, cheers rent the air, and continued unceasingly, till the *Waiwera* bearing New Zealand "Soldiers of the Queen" to the scene of war, had passed from sight.

The first New Zealand Contingent was commanded by Major Robin, who is a splendid example of the born warrior. Originally a gunner in the B Battery New Zealand Artillery, he rose in the Otago Hussars through all the grades of non-commissioned officers to command of the troop. This regiment from that time was unsurpassed in efficiency by any in the Colony. As an instance of the pluck and energy of the gallant major, a characteristic story is told: When Sir John Richardson died he was accorded a military funeral, and was interred in the Northern Cemetery. On the day of the funeral the Leith was in high flood, and there was a general opinion that the Dundas Street Bridge would not bear the weight of the gun-carriage bearing the honoured remains. Major Robin at once volunteered to drive the gun-carriage across, and accomplished the dangerous task without mishap.

Major Robin took charge of the New Zealand Contingent which attended the Diamond Jubilee, and had the honour of commanding the mixed Colonial escort which accompanied the Queen on her visit to London during the celebrations.

Captain Madocks, who distinguished himself in the fight of the 15th of January at Slingersfontein, is a Wellington man, full of pluck and resource, and as we now know, admirably calculated to become a leader of men.

The second Contingent, under the command of Major Cradock and numbering 242 officers and men and 300 horses, left Wellington on the 20th of January—upwards of 70,000 spectators congregating to witness the departure of the fine fellows, whose appearance was alike martial and workmanly. These two Contingents, equipped and sent over at the cost of the New Zealand Government—the funds being raised among the settlers themselves—were not by any means New Zealand's entire contribution. Two more Contingents followed, and afterwards a fifth, consisting of 500 rough riders; some of the smartest men that could be gathered together! Indeed the whole force was remarkable for its smartness, and before it had been long in the Transvaal was highly praised by General French for its fine horsemanship and coolness under fire.

An interesting feature belonging to the New Zealanders, and one which must have struck consternation in the heart of the Boers, was the Maori war-cry of the troops. This was composed by Trooper Galloway, one of the



HON. W. P. SCHREINER, C.M.G.

Premier of the Cape Parliament, 1898-1900.

Photo by Elliott & Fry, London.

Queensland

Volunteer Contingent, and taught by him to his comrades. The war cry in the Maori tongue is "Kia, Kaha, Niu Tirenī. Whawhai maiea mo te Kuini, to kaianga. Ake! ake! ake!" which interpreted means, "Be strong, New Zealand. Fight bravely for your Queen, for your country. Ever! ever! ever!" The interest of the Maoris in Great Britain was evinced in practical form. They held carnival, danced native dances, and sang native songs, devoting the proceeds to the Patriotic Fund. Their only regret was their inability to be enrolled among the defenders of the country.

QUEENSLAND

The Queenslanders, under the command of Colonel Ricardo, have, as before said, the honour of being the first of Great Britain's children to come forward to her assistance. Their deeds are now familiar to us, for they are associated with Colonel Pilcher's famous raid to Sunnyside and Douglas, and also with the magnificent ride of General French for the relief of Kimberley. But before July 1899 we were scarcely acquainted with our warlike brothers across the ocean.

The prime mover in the patriotic scheme of assisting the Mother Country in her need was the Hon. J. R. Dickson, the Premier. As we know, he lost not a moment. He did not wait for the need of assistance to be recognised. In this respect he followed the splendid example set in 1884 by the late Mr. Dalley, who, while acting Premier for Sir A. Stuart, telegraphed independently the wish of New South Wales to assist in the military undertakings of the Mother Country. The Premier knew the spirit of loyalty and patriotism that pervaded Queensland, and made haste to give it utterance. He was well supported by all sections of the Government and of the people, and speedily his action was imitated all over the world.

Queensland by degrees sent out two Contingents composed of mounted infantry and one machine-gun section of Royal Australian Artillery; and finally, a third Contingent, of which 75 per cent. were bushmen, all first-class riders and splendid shots. They were men of grand physique, many of them wealthy, and many sons of prominent citizens. The infantry were not mounted when despatched, but all being good horsemen, and their services being chiefly required as scouts or to assist cavalry, they had mounts provided for them on arrival by the Imperial authorities. The Queensland Mounted Infantry was organised in 1884 by Colonel Ricardo, who is styled the "father" of mounted infantry in Queensland, and belongs to the Militia Division of the Colonial Defence force. The force is organised on the basis of three years' service, and ordinarily is recruited from the bushman and farmer class—a sterling and hardy set of fellows, whose plain motto is "For God and the right." The uniform, a highly becoming one, is of kharki, with claret-coloured facings. The hat is of the usual "brigand" shape, decorated at the side with a smart tuft of emu plumes.

The whole of the expenses of transport, equipment, arms, and food for men and horses during the voyage was defrayed by the Colony; pay on the field was met by the Imperial Exchequer, the Colony only meeting the difference between the Imperial and Colonial rates, the latter being higher.

The first Contingent consisted of 262 men and officers, who sailed in the *Cornwall* on November 11, 1899, amid a wild display of patriotic enthusiasm.

Officers of the first Contingent—Staff—Major P. R. Ricardo, to rank as Lieut.-Colonel; Sup. Captain R. S. Browne; Lieutenant C. H. A. Pelham;

The Transvaal War

Machine-Gun Section—Lieutenant C. H. Black, Royal Australian Artillery. A Company Queensland Mounted Infantry—Captain H. G. Chauvel; Lieutenant A. G. Adie (wounded at Sunnyside under Colonel Pilcher); Lieutenant C. A. Cumming; Lieutenant T. W. Glasgow; Lieutenant D. E. Reid. B Company Queensland Mounted Infantry—Captain P. W. G. Pinnock; Lieutenant H. Bailey; Lieutenant R. Dowse; Lieutenant R. Gordon. The second Contingent was composed of 148 men and 8 officers, with 5 additional officers for special service in South Africa. Officers of second Contingent—Lieut.-Colonel Kenneth Hutchison, Headquarters Staff, commanding; Captain W. G. Thompson, Queensland Mounted Infantry; Lieutenant H. J. Imrie Harris, Queensland Mounted Infantry; Lieutenant A. F. Crichton, Queensland Mounted Infantry; Lieutenant James Walker, 3rd Queensland (Kennedy) Regiment; Lieutenant R. M. Stodart, Queensland Mounted Infantry. Supernumeraries—Captain Sir Edward Stewart-Richardson, Bart., 3rd Battalion Black Watch; Lieutenant John H. Fox. Additional officers attached—Surgeon-Captain H. R. Nolan, A.M.C. Queensland Defence; Major D. W. Rankin; Captain F. W. Toll, special service; Captain A. E. Crichton, Camp Quartermaster; Captain W. T. Deacon, Camp Adjutant.

The second Contingent sailed in the *Maori King* on January 20. The night before they were to start it was discovered that the ship had been set on fire, but the flames were extinguished before much damage was done. There seemed to be no doubt it was the work of an incendiary, and the police kept a close watch over the vessel till she was fairly away. It was regarded as significant that the crew consisted mainly of Dutchmen and Germans.

The third Contingent, which sailed in the *Duke of Portland* on March 1, was 300 strong, with 350 horses. In addition to the above, about 20 men and 50 horses had been sent to Sydney, and sailed with the New South Wales Contingent on February 26. After accommodating men and horses, it was found that the *Duke of Portland* had still 500 tons of space available for cargo; this the Queensland Government offered to fill with forage for horses and men, and present to the Imperial Government.

SOUTH AND WEST AUSTRALIA

South Australia speedily sent two Contingents to the front, and offered more should further help be required. The first Contingent was commanded by Captain F. H. Howland. This officer was born in Kensington, London, 1863, and served for three years in the Middlesex E.V. Royal Engineers. At the expiration of that time he went to Australia, and in 1885 joined the volunteer company which was being formed at Mount Gambier, in which he was appointed lance-corporal. Since then he has passed through every rank, was appointed captain in 1893, and made adjutant in June 1898. Captain Howland then became senior captain in the second battalion, and—having passed his examination for his majority—on the illness of his commanding officer, commanded the battalion on several occasions.

The officers of the Contingent were as follows: Captain F. H. Howland, D Company, Mount Gambier Infantry, C.O.; Captain G. R. Lascelles, Royal Fusiliers, A.D.C. to Lord Tennyson (attached); Lieutenant J. H. Stapleton, A Company, first battalion infantry; Lieutenant F. M. Blair, B Company, first battalion infantry; Lieutenant J. W. Powell, D Company, Mount Gambier Infantry; Major J. T. Toll, Medical Staff.

In regard to the payment of the troops the arrangement was simple. The men received 5s. a day. That meant that the pay received through the South

South and West Australia

Australian Government and the pay from the Imperial Government would together amount to 5s. a day. Whatever amount the Imperial Government gave their soldiers, members of the South Australian Contingent received the same while on active service, and the balance paid to them by the South Australian Government would bring the amount up to 5s. a day. They did not propose to send any money from the Colony while the men were away, in order that, while fighting side by side with the Imperial soldiers, they should not receive more pay than their comrades. Their South Australian pay would be left at home until their return. If the British rate of pay were 1s. 4d., that arrangement would mean that 3s. 8d. per day would be due to them from the Colonial Government. Before starting the men received one month's pay, amounting to £7, which was considered sufficient to supply their immediate wants, and see them over the voyage. On arrival at Port Elizabeth they began to receive the same pay as the British soldiers.

The officers of the second Contingent were: Captain J. Reade, commanding; J. F. Humphries, senior subaltern; G. H. Lynch, second subaltern; F. M. Rowell, third subaltern; G. J. Restall Walter, junior subaltern; W. J. Press, warrant officer, in charge of the "Colt" automatic machine-gun; William De Passy, warrant officer.

The first Contingent of infantry was afterwards turned into mounted infantry. The second Contingent was composed of cavalry, and one machine-gun section. The Australian Horse was drilled on exactly the same lines as British cavalry, and was, in fact, under the instruction of British cavalrymen. The men were either members of volunteer corps, or volunteered on the outbreak of the war from all parts of the Colony.

When the news of British reverses reached the Colony, the patriotic fervour of which the despatch of the first Contingent was a practical proof, was once more fanned into flame. The desire for Australian representation on the field of battle again translated itself into action, and the intimation that not only would further assistance be welcomed but that it was really wanted met with ready response. No lack of volunteers troubled the authorities, for numerous offers to serve were received from all parts of the colony, from persons of all classes and all ages. Among the youngest of those volunteering was Allan O'Halloran Wright, who was but fourteen years of age, who accompanied the Contingent as trumpeter. He is exceptionally well developed, and considerably taller than many of the rank and file. Among others was Sergeant Hanley, who was in the thick of the fight at Majuba Hill. He served with the 92nd Gordon Highlanders in the Afghan War, and received two decorations, including medal with the Kabul, Kandahar, and Charasia bars, and a star for the historical march from Kabul to Kandahar. He, with others, was mentioned in despatches for his conduct in defending Lord Roberts from an attack of the Ghilzais. He fought in twenty-seven engagements in Afghanistan, and was the youngest man in the regiment. He stood side by side with "Fighting Mac," who was then a lance-corporal, and promoted to a commission for his distinguished services. After the Afghan War he went to India, and though he had completed seven years service, and need have done no more, he volunteered for service with the 92nd Highlanders in South Africa. After the miserable experiences of Majuba he went to South Australia, where he served for nine years with the permanent force. He acted as warder in the Yatala prison till, hearing of the war, he instantly volunteered.

On the 28th of October the Contingent dined at Government House, and after the meal the men were received in the great hall and thus eloquently

The Transvaal War

addressed by Lord Tennyson: "Men of the South Australian Contingent of the British army in South Africa—I am proud of being your Commander-in-Chief because of your splendid patriotism, your alacrity in obeying the summons of the old country, your self-sacrifice in leaving your comfortable homes to fight for the United Empire, to maintain the Queen's position in South Africa, and to rescue the down-trodden Uitlanders from the political and social serfdom imposed on them by the Boers. When I was at home in 1897 I saw some of you in the Jubilee procession, and you were vociferously cheered by the millions of people in the streets. Why did they cheer you? Because they felt that you were our kith and kin, and that you were not only taking part in a triumphal procession in honour of the Queen, but that you were pledging yourselves that, if the needful occasion should arise, you would fight for our Queen and for our Empire. Your action now, and the action of all Australasia and of Canada, will make the nations of the earth hesitate before they strike at our Empire in the future, seeing our Imperial loyalty, our Imperial solidarity, our Imperial unity, our Imperial strength. I believe from my experience as your Governor that there is no man throughout South Australia who would not stand up in time of stress in defence of the Queen, the Empire, and the Union Jack. You are a gallant and stalwart body of men, and we rejoice in your soldierly appearance and your loyal enthusiasm. We feel sure that you will do your duty nobly, and return covered with honour and renown. Remember, my men, that obedience to discipline, and patience in enduring hardship, and promptitude in the performance of your military duties are the first steps towards the making of a victorious army. You are to be joined in South Africa to highly organised battalions of troops, some of the best in the world, commanded by highly trained and scientific officers. Obey these officers and your own implicitly, from the corporal to the Commander-in-Chief, whether on the field or in garrison, or wherever you are; and I need not tell you that, if you keep your eyes and ears open, you will learn a great deal that will be useful to you in the future. May Australia never be visited by war! If this ever happens, the British fleet will protect Australia in the first line of defence, but you must have an efficiently trained army as a second line of defence. Knowing this, the Federal Government of the future will, I am confident, put Australia in a proper state of military preparedness; and that is one of the reasons why I glory in our Federal Commonwealth to be. Remember always, my friends, that you are the guardians of a magnificent heritage, of a country of which you are justly proud, and that the experience which you Australians will gain in South Africa will not only enable you to fight, if necessary, for this country, but will also enable you to teach your comrades-in-arms, who are obliged to stay at home, something of the needful requirements of modern warfare. I know the General who is to lead you, Sir Redvers Buller. He is married to a cousin of my wife's, and I can tell you that a finer soldier could not be met with. The motto he would wish to be given you would be: 'Obedience and cheerful courage on service are an army's strength.' I am glad to have allowed—though it is personally a loss to myself—my A.D.C., Captain Lascelles, to accompany you, with special leave from the War Office at home. As you are aware, in him you have a thoroughly experienced and capable officer, and, like Captain Howland and your other officers, he is fond of you and devoted to your welfare. If I had to command a British army, I should know that, when you have had a little more military experience, with your pluck, your good marksmanship, and your loyalty, the standard of the Queen could well be intrusted to the keeping of the

West Australia and Tasmania

Australian Contingent. It is my duty as well as my pleasure to tell you that, on behalf of the British people, Her Majesty's Government have sent me two telegrams appreciative of the enthusiastic patriotism of yourselves, of the Ministry, and of South Australia. It is also my duty as well as my pleasure to read you the kindly and gracious message from the Queen, which has moved us all very deeply: 'Her Majesty the Queen desires to thank the people of her Colonies in Australia for the striking manifestation of loyalty and patriotism in their voluntary offer to send troops to co-operate with Her Majesty's Imperial forces in maintaining her position and the rights of British subjects in South Africa. She wishes the troops God-speed and a safe return.' The Boers have forced war upon us and have invaded our territory. You are going to fight for the cause of British freedom, for the honour of Great Britain, for the honour of Australia. In the name, then, of our beloved Queen, of Great Britain, and of South Australia, I bid you farewell, and I wish you, after your work is accomplished, a safe and happy home-coming."

On the 26th of January the second South Australian Contingent started for the Transvaal amid scenes of great enthusiasm. The Governor, Lord Tennyson, again made an inspiring speech and wished them God-speed.

WEST AUSTRALIA

West Australia sent with the same energy of patriotism two Contingents amounting to 230 officers and men, with offers of more if required. The officers were: Capt. R. Moor, R.A.; Capt. H. S. Pilkington, late 21st Hussars; Major M'Williams, Medical Officer; Lieut. J. Campbell; Lieut. H. F. Darling; Lieut. F. W. M. Parker.

TASMANIA

The Tasmanian Government were not behind the other Colonies of Australia in their desire to show their loyalty and patriotism by offering troops for Imperial service. There was, of course, some difference of opinion regarding the policy of going to fight at all, as the following cutting from a local journal will show: "In Tasmania, as elsewhere, there is a certain number, not many, of the crawling tribe, who always find that their country is in the wrong, and are never so happy as when they can hold up some foe as a model of virtue in contrast with the brutal Briton. It is curious to find those who call themselves friends of the working-classes indulging in this vein of oratory, but it is common to all the Colonies, and may be said to account for the little influence that the party has on general affairs. We have had here, of course, the inevitable Catholic priest who has denounced the British, for he always appears when Great Britain has any serious work to do, just as there is the usual meeting of Irish in New York. In Hobart the Catholic priests spoke feeling and appropriate words about the departure of the Contingent, but on the West Coast one Father Murphy went on the rampage in the good old style, and proceeded to denounce the country under the Government of which he lives, and which is liberal enough to allow him to say such things with impunity. I wonder whether these folk ever think about what would happen to them if they talked in the same strain in France, Germany, or even in the United States. It does not matter to Great Britain what these discontented ones say, but they might learn from the liberty they use the value of the freedom which they enjoy. On the whole, the people of Tasmania, while they deeply regret that war should be necessary, are fully alive to the value of a united empire, and are keenly anxious that she may vindicate her position in South Africa, and finally

The Transvaal War

get rid of the Boer incubus which has weighed upon the country ever since the Gladstone Ministry adopted the policy of scuttle and palaver."

This quotation shows the drift of popular sentiment, and in the end loyalty everywhere prevailed, and some splendid fellows volunteered to go to the front. These were not "raw material," but intelligent, handy soldiers, accustomed to the rough and tumble of bush life, and ready to provide for emergencies. Their commander, Captain Cameron, had seen some service, and took part in the famous march to Kandahar.

The first Contingent, sent in the *Medic*, consisted of eighty men, of which the officers were: Capt. C. St. Clair Cameron, Erandale, commanding (who was afterwards a prisoner in Pretoria); Lieut. W. Brown; Lieut. F. B. Heritage; Lieut. G. E. Reid, 1st Regt., Hobart. Of the privates the following were subsequently taken prisoners to Pretoria: M. H. Swan, V. J. Peers, A. Button. J. H. Whitelaw, also a private, who has distinguished himself by gallantry in the field and by saving a comrade's life at the imminent risk of his own, will probably receive the V.C.

The second Contingent, which consisted of forty-five men, was under the command of Sergt. J. Stagg, of Deloraine.

Both Contingents were composed almost entirely of gentlemen.

Tasmania also contributed 100 men to the Imperial Australian Corps which was raised at Mr. J. Chamberlain's suggestion from all the Australasian Colonies. The volunteering of the Tasmanian contingent to join hands with Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and shoulder to shoulder to support the "flag of old renown" in South Africa, gave origin to the following lines written by a Tasmanian poet:—

"War? We would rather peace; but, Mother, if fight we must,
There be none of your sons on whom you can lean with a surer trust;
Bone of your bone are we, and in death would be dust of your dust!"

THE BUSHMEN'S CORPS

There was immense excitement over the formation of the Imperial Bushmen or Roughriders' Corps. It consisted of over 2000 mounted men, selected from those experienced in riding and looking after stock in country in its natural rough state, unbroken by cultivation, fences or roads. In the first instance, New Zealand made an offer to provide 500 such men, after which—as more were required—Australia was asked to raise a further 2000, the Imperial Government bearing the cost of forwarding them to the seat of war, and maintaining and paying them there. Four thousand applications from Victoria and 2000 from Adelaide were received. The citizens of Rockhampton immediately offered to provide and equip twenty-five Bushmen. New South Wales was represented by a Contingent of 500 men, and Queensland decided to join with the other Colonies in organising this smart and serviceable corps, whose value was estimated as equal to twice the number of infantry.

The movement was a most popular one, and gifts of horses were sent in from every direction. The public subscribed liberally, Captain Bridges alone giving £1000 towards the expenses of the Victorian Bushmen.

The officers selected for the New South Wales Bushmen were Lieut.-Colonel Airey in command, Major Onslow, three captains and fourteen subalterns. The movement was so popular and subscriptions so liberal, that it was decided that 100 men should be sent from South Australia instead of the fifty originally proposed. Colonel Williams, of the New South Wales Contingent, was

India's Contingents

appointed principal medical officer for all the Australian Contingents serving in South Africa. The departure of the Bushmen on the 17th of January was a magnificent climax to the many magnificent demonstrations of patriotism which had been evidenced throughout the Colonies.

INDIA'S CONTINGENTS

Between the Australasian and Canadian Colonies and the Volunteer Contingent from India there is a certain difference which it is necessary to recognise. In the Colonies, the movement to help the Mother Country in her need, though prompted and encouraged by popular enthusiasm, patriotism, and donations from private and public resources, was suggested, voiced, and supported by the respective Governments, the Premiers of which acted very prominently in the enterprise, whereas in India, the offer of military assistance was a spontaneous impulse springing from individual patriotism and carried out by private enterprise. India, being a Crown Colony, could display her loyalty in no other way. Her position was somewhat similar to the Home Establishment, and her regular British troops were under orders for South Africa in exactly the same way as were the Home forces. Nevertheless, India was not backward in independent demonstrations of loyalty. English officers from various native corps, who, in ordinary circumstances, could serve only in their respective Indian Contingents, now came forward and volunteered for active service in aid of the Imperial cause in South Africa. The "men" volunteered from all directions. Dapper young Calcutta merchants, sporting tea-planters from Assam, gallant indigo-planters, and dashing roughriders from Bombay, Assam, Bengal, Cawnpore, Mysore, and all manner of districts unknown even by name to the Little Englander sent in their appeal, and pressed to be allowed to play their part in the defence of the Empire; and thus the smart regiments known as Lumsden's Horse, the Railway Contingent, and the Ceylon Mounted Contingent came to be recruited.

Colonel Lumsden, lately Commandant of the Assam Valley Light Horse, generously assisted both financially and personally in raising and equipping the force, and quantities of Calcutta men offered their services, their expenses being guaranteed by the firms employing them. Gifts and subscriptions poured in. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, headed the subscription-list by a handsome contribution, and so generous was the response of all India, that about £30,000 was collected in connection with the Transvaal war, including the equipment of volunteers.

The native princes offered troops and horses, and loyally expressed themselves towards the Queen Empress. The troops were declined, it being understood that the war was between white men alone. Their offers of horses were, however, accepted. Nevertheless, the generosity of the princes was not to be denied, and several among them, the Maharajah of Bikanir, the Maharajah of Durbhanga, and the Nawab of Moorshedabad, subscribed liberally to the expenses of Lumsden's Horse, offering at the same time their best wishes for the success of the Contingent and the complete triumph of the British arms in South Africa.

The Nizam of Hyderabad, whose State is as large as France, and whose relations with the sovereign have always been most cordial, assisted handsomely, saying at the same time, with true Oriental grace, that his troops, his purse, and his own sword were at the service of the Queen. The Maharajah of Tanjore contributed 5000 rupees, while his son furnished a complete set of

The Transvaal War

X-ray apparatus. The Nawab of Bhavnagar State presented fifty fully equipped Arab horses to the force, and quantities of other prominent Nawabs displayed corresponding liberality. The Maharanee of Bettiah generously presented to each volunteer from her district a horse, and Khwajah Mahomed Khan forwarded from Mardan (on the Punjab frontier) the sum of 2000 rupees as an expression of loyalty, with his best wishes for the success of Lumsden's Horse. As an instance of the excitement and martial feeling in regard to the Indian Transvaal Contingent, it may be noted that the instant the scheme was proposed, two-thirds of the Light Horse of Behar volunteered for service, promising to provide everything except means of transport. They formed part of Lumsden's Horse, who were all men under forty years of age, many of them of independent means, with horses of their own.

The following is the list of officers who were appointed to Colonel Lumsden's Corps:—

Lieut.-Colonel Dugald McT. Lumsden, Assam Valley Light Horse Volunteers, to be Commandant, with the temporary rank of Lieut.-Colonel in the army; Lieut.-Colonel Eden Showers, late Commandant Surma Valley Light Horse Volunteers, to be second in command, with the temporary rank of Major in the army; Captain J. H. B. Beresford, Indian Staff Corps, to be Company Commander. To be Captains, with the temporary rank of Captain in the army: Major Henry Chamney, Surma Valley Light Horse Volunteers; Captain Francis Clifford, Coorg and Mysore Volunteer Rifles; Second Lieutenant Bernard W. Holmes, East India Railway Volunteer Rifles; Second Lieutenant John B. Rutherford, Behar Light Horse Volunteers. To be Lieutenants, with the temporary rank of Lieutenant in the army: Lieutenant Charles L. Sidey, Surma Valley Light Horse Volunteers; Herbert O. Pugh, gent.; George A. Nevill, gent.; Charles E. Crane, gent. Captain Louis H. Noblett, the Royal Irish Rifles, to be a Company Commander; Captain Neville C. Taylor, Indian Staff Corps, to be Adjutant; Surgeon-Captain Samuel A. Powell, M.D., Surma Valley Light Horse Volunteers, to be Medical Officer, with the temporary rank of Captain; William Stevenson, gent., to be Veterinary Officer, with the temporary rank of Veterinary Lieutenant.

The Government provided free passages, and the railway authorities gave free passes. With the force went Mrs. C. W. Park and Mrs. M. C. Curry, wives of Lieut.-Colonel C. W. Park and Major M. C. Curry, of the 1st Devonshire Regiment, to assist in the hospitals in Natal. This regiment, it may be remembered, was with Sir George White, and had four officers severely wounded in its first battle, Elands-laagte, and was shut up in Ladysmith for over four months. Lumsden's Horse sailed from India on February 6, much envied by all who had not the good fortune to be of their number.

Ceylon was not behind India in patriotic enthusiasm, though its powers were more limited. Great demonstrations of loyalty prevailed everywhere in the island, and volunteers were eager to be enrolled. Out of the numbers applying 125 men were picked out and 5 officers. The force was armed with Lee-Metford magazine rifles, 500 rounds of ammunition, and were nearly all mounted on trained horses. Captain Rutherford, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was in command, and Captain Anderson, Royal Artillery, was second in command. Captain Toogood (Warwickshire Regiment) also accompanied the force.

The planters and merchants of Ceylon presented upwards of 30,000 lbs. of tea to be delivered free to the troops in South Africa, to be shipped with the Contingent, and many private individuals were equally generous. The



GENERAL BRABANT, C.M.G.

After Photo by S. B. Barnard, Cape Town.

Cape Colony

Legislative Council unanimously agreed that all expenses connected with the equipment, arming, transport, and, when necessary, mounting of the Ceylon Contingent, should be borne by the Colony. This liberal decision was acknowledged by Mr. Chamberlain in the following terms:—

MR. CHAMBERLAIN TO GOVERNOR THE RIGHT HON.

SIR J. WEST RIDGEWAY.

"Your telegrams of January 9 and January 10. Her Majesty's Government congratulate Ceylon on completion of Contingent, which they accept with much pleasure, and highly appreciate patriotic and generous action of Legislative Council."

The Ceylon Mounted Contingent sailed on February 2 for active service in South Africa, amid the prayers and good wishes of a huge concourse of people.

In addition to the above contingents from India and Ceylon, the Indian Government sent the guns and equipment for three field-batteries of 15-pounders, and also three corps of native transport drivers and muleteers—about 400 in all—under British officers.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN VOLUNTEERS¹

CAPE COLONY

It has been said that the whole course of the campaign might have been changed had the Cape Colony forces been utilised sufficiently early. If the Cape Ministry had begun at once by employing the splendid Colonial forces at its disposal, not for purposes of defiance, but of defence, the tale of raid and rebellion, which has been as harassing as the tale of war, would never have been told. But as it is useless to talk of the *might have been*, or of things done or left undone by the Cape Ministry, we must proceed to consider the services of the Cape Colonial Force, of the ten thousand volunteers, when they were eventually allowed to come into action. Of the splendid troops in Mafeking and Kimberley the Colony must ever be proud, for on them fell the weight of showing what worthy offshoots of the bold and the brave the sun of South Africa has reared. These men, recruited for the most part from Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Queenstown, Grahamstown, and Kimberley, consisted largely of past and present Cape Colony Volunteers. They were bone of our bone, and when the hour of stress arrived they proved themselves as such. They were immensely proud to be included in the term British, and right royally they acted up to the higher interpretation of that term. Though they have borne years of insult and suffered in innumerable ways for their fealty and devotion to the Mother Country, they rushed to arms joyfully in the hope that Great Britain would reassert herself, annex the whole of South Africa, and administer it under one Government. They longed to be quit of Dutch intrigue. They pined for a strong rule, one that would be free of the vacillations that had kept them on tenter-hooks for years, and prevented their living in a sense of security enjoyed by other freeborn British subjects. By these loyal fellows the towns of Mafeking and Kimberley were practically defended. In those places there were very few Imperial troops, and little could have been accomplished without the aptness and grit of the Colonials. The reason why they appeared to be neglected is not far to seek. No man is a

¹ For much valuable information I am indebted to the editor of the *South African Volunteer Gazette*.

The Transvaal War

prophet in his own country, and to this trite fact may be attributed the want of instant appreciation accorded to the Cape Colonial Volunteers who so spontaneously and with genuine zeal responded to the call of duty. While we made much of the Colonials from over the seas—the “Visiting Colonials” as they are called—we failed to see that at our elbows were the very men who would leap forward at a word and check the onward career of the enemy and put a stop to his annexations while our troops in England were getting into shape. But later we jumped at them. Then the Cape Colonists began to be vastly appreciated, and to receive the highest encomiums from all who had the good fortune to serve with them.

The following is a table of some of the prominent Colonial forces of Cape Colony, 1900:—

CORPS	ESTABLISHMENT		EFFECTIVE TO DATE			RE-MARKS	OFFICERS
	All Ranks	Horses	Officers	N.C.O.'s and Men	Horses		
IRREGULARS RAISED BEFORE WAR							
Rhodesian Regiment	These numbers have been increased within the last few months by recruiting, Kitchener's Horse showing an increase of about 50. The figures, therefore, are only approximately correct.	Col. Baden-Powell, 5th Dragoon Guards
Protectorate Regiment	650	...	...	...	...
Kimberley Regiment . . . . .	...	...	...	...	...
Diamond Fields Horse	100	...	...	...	...
Bechuanaland Rifles	100	...	...	...	...
IRREGULARS RAISED SINCE WAR							
Rimington's Guides	212	220	Lieut.-Col. Hon. J. Byng, 10th Hussars Capt. Villiers, Royal Horse Guards	
1st S.A.L. Horse	599	580	...	...	...
Roberts's Horse	599	580	...	...	...
Kitchener's Horse	599	580	41	617	586		
1st Brabant's Light Horse	599	580	...	...	...
2nd Brabant's Light Horse	599	580	...	...	...
Gatacre's Scouts	50	50	...	...	...
Montmorency's Cavalry Division Scouts	100	100	...	...	...
6th Cavalry Division Scouts	25	25	...	...	...
Chief in Command's Body Guard	50	50	...	...	...
LOCAL DEFENCE CORPS							
Nesbitt's Mounted Local Defence Corps	400	400	
Bayley's Mounted Local Defence Corps	500	500	...	...	...
Orpen's Horse	300	300	...	...	...
Railway Pioneer Regiment	1008	8	34	959	15		
VOLUNTEERS							
P.A.O. Cape Artillery	
Diamond Fields Artillery	
Cape Garrison Artillery	

STRENGTH OF VOLUNTEER CORPS ON ACTIVE SERVICE

Prince Alfred's Own Cape Artillery—officers, 5; other ranks, 117; total, 122. Diamond Fields Artillery—officers, 4; other ranks, 119; total, 123. Cape Garrison Artillery—officers, 18; other ranks, 431; total, 449. Duke of Edinburgh's Own Volunteer Rifles—officers, 31; other ranks, 1027; total, 1058. Cape Town Highlanders—officers, 12; other ranks, 392; total, 404. Prince Alfred's Volunteer Guard—officers, 21; other ranks, 494; total, 515.

Cape Colony

to say: "The delay in recruiting irregulars at the Cape was not in the least due to the unwillingness of the Uitlanders there or of the British residents. It was the result of political considerations which were then thought to be of sufficient weight by well-advised men on the spot. The delay caused a great deal of heart-burning among hundreds who were only too keen to take up arms; and it is only quite recently that permission has been given to form irregular corps and to accept the services of the Cape Volunteers already in existence, who were eager to serve. Directly the permission was given men flocked to the standard, and you have now Rimington's Guides, the South African Light Horse, and the Cape Volunteers, who have all promptly proceeded to the front. Another most useful body is now being recruited both in Natal and in Cape Colony—I mean the Railway Pioneer Corps. It is being officered by the most eminent of the mining engineers of Johannesburg, and the rank and file are made up of skilled mechanics, who are specially qualified for the particular duties they will have to perform. They will be armed in the ordinary way, drilled as an engineer corps, and will be expected to do the ordinary work of the military engineer."

The Imperial Light Horse, formed by Majors Sampson and Karri Davies, was largely composed of Australians. Many Johannesburg people joined it, most of them "all-round sportsmen, capital shots, and keen riders." They joined on the principle of not allowing the Mother Country to fight their battles for them while they had a right arm with which to assert themselves.

The Cape Mounted Police, 1000 strong, who were also sent on active service at the commencement of the war, were invaluable. They were remarkable, not alone for gallantry, but efficiency. When Captain de Montmorency's Scouts were cut off near Labuschagnes Nek by some 800 Boers, Captain Golsworthy on the last day of the year came to the rescue with a party of the Cape Mounted Police, and put the enemy to flight.

Early in 1900, the Rhodesian Field Force, under the command of Lieut.-General Sir Frederick Carrington, was organised to operate in Northern Rhodesia, and stop any trekking of members of the Free State or Transvaal or rebels of Cape Colony into Rhodesian territory.

The officers were:—Major C. D. Learoyd, Royal Engineers; Major A. V. Jenner, D.S.O., Rifle Brigade; Major C. L. Josling, Royal Army Medical Corps; Major G. A. R. Carew, 7th Hussars; Captain E. Peach, Indian Staff Corps; Captain R. G. Partridge, Army Ordnance Department; Captain W. E. Lawrence, South Wales Borderers; Second Lieutenant C. S. Rome, 11th Hussars; Second Lieutenant C. H. Dillon, Rifle Brigade; Paymaster G. J. C. Whittington, Hon. Colonel; Lieutenant Pemberton; Major P. Dalton, late 3rd V.B. Royal Fusiliers; Major C. D. Guise, 3rd Gloucester Regiment; Brevet-Major P. Moir Byres, 1st Dragoon Guards; Captain C. W. Kennard, 3rd Gordon Highlanders; Second Lieutenant W. H. Longden, 4th East Surrey Regiment; Chaplain Rev. F. P. Moreton, M.A.; Lieutenant R. Laing, surgeon; Lieutenant E. A. Parsons, surgeon; Lieutenant H. Cardin, surgeon; Lieutenant F. F. Bond, surgeon; Lieutenant G. H. Collard, surgeon; Lieutenant F. R. Pullin, surgeon; Lieutenant H. D. Buss, surgeon; Colonel H. C. Wood, late 10th Hussars; Lieut.-Colonel J. Leslie, 5th Royal Irish Fusiliers; Lieutenant-Colonel B. G. Booth, late Scots Guards; Major J. W. Traill, late 4th Cheshire; Captain R. Gray, C.M.G., late 6th Dragoons; Captain E. C. P. Curzon, late 18th Hussars; Captain F. C. P. Curzon, Royal Irish Rifles; Captain H. F. F. Fisher, Army Service Corps; Veterinary-Captain H. T. W.

The Transvaal War

Mann; Lieutenant J. K. Rashleigh, late Artillery Militia; Lieutenant F. J. Lawrence, late English Militia; Lieutenant C. A. Burgoyne, 3rd Dragoon Guards; Lieutenant A. Wormald, surgeon; Major E. J. Tickell, D.S.O., 14th Hussars; Captain J. Ponsonby, Coldstream Guards; Captain Pereira, Coldstream Guards; Captain H. J. Haddock, Royal Welsh Fusiliers; Captain R. K. Arbuthnot, Royal Irish Regiment; Lieutenant W. D. P. Watson, late Scots Greys; Major G. Wright, R.G.A.; Major A. Paris, R.M.A.; Captain and Hon. Major G. E. Giles, late R.A. In all, forty-four officers.

NATAL

The following is a list of the names and numbers of the local forces which the colony of Natal has put into the field: Natal Naval Volunteers, 150; Natal Carabineers (Colonel Royston, since dead), 465; Natal Mounted Rifles, 200; Border Mounted Rifles, 270; Umvoti Mounted Rifles (Major Leuchars), 130; Natal Field Artillery, 120; Natal Royal Rifles, 145; Durban Light Infantry, 400; Medical Staff, 7; Veterinary, 3; Staff, 19; Natal Mounted Police (Europeans) at Ladysmith and other portions of the Colony (Colonel Dartnell), 649; Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry (Colonel Thorneycroft, Royal Scots Fusiliers, D.A.A.G.), 500; Bethune's Mounted Infantry (Lieut.-Colonel Bethune, 16th Lancers, Colonel Addison second in command), 500; Imperial Light Infantry (Colonel Nash), 1000; Imperial Light Horse (Colonel Scott Chisholm, killed 21st November 1899), 500; Colonial Scouts (Colonel Edwards, Captain Sydney Osborne), 500; Ambulance Bearers (1st section), 1000; Ambulance Bearers (2nd section), 600. Total, 7158.

The South African Light Horse is mentioned among the Cape Colonial troops, though it has done notable work in Natal. The second and third regiments of the corps became respectively Roberts's and Kitchener's Horse. In the district of Kaffraria half the available men were embodied, men belonging to the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Volunteer Rifles—one of the corps of "regulars" belonging to Cape Colony.

The South African Light Horse was started on the 12th of November. By order of Sir Redvers Buller a recruiting office was opened in Cape Town, whereupon the place was instantly invaded. Patriotic fervour ran high, and every one desired to take a share in showing forth the might of Great Britain. The officers, Major Byng (10th Hussars, with temporary rank of colonel) and Captain Villiers (R.H.G., with temporary rank of major), set themselves manfully to hurry the work of organisation. In no time men were picked—fine riders and fine shots—mounted and equipped. Saddlery, tents, harness, ammunition—all were gathered together with startling celerity. Among the troopers were British-born subjects, Uitlanders, Colonials, Americans, farmers, seamen, &c. The officers hailed from many regiments—the 10th Hussars, Royal Horse Guards, Life Guards, 11th Hussars, 20th Hussars, Gordon Highlanders, Yeomanry, Militia—all manner of men of distinction and wealth and breeding uniting together in a common brotherhood for a common cause.

The following is a list of the officers: Colonel Byng, 10th Hussars, commanding; Major Villiers, Royal Horse Guards, second in command; Captain Fraser, 1st Life Guards, adjutant; Captain French, late L.G., Maxims; Captain Harden, Transport; Captain Murray; Captain Anderson; Captain Hull, paymaster; Vet.-Captain Walker; Vet.-Lieutenant Steele; Chaplain Rev. G. Eales. Squadron Leaders—Captain Balfour, late 11th Hussars; Major (Bimbash) Stewart, Gordon Highlanders; Captain Kirkwood; Captain Gatacre; Captain Renton; Captain Whittaker; Captain Child; Captain Allgood.

The Imperial Yeomanry

Lieutenants Milne, Tucker, Brown, Jobling, De Rougemont, Tarbutt, Davis, Bathurst, Shepherd; Second Lieutenants Warren, Carlton Smith, Hamilton, Cock, Leith, Welstead, Robinson, Oates, Johnson, Vignelles, Vaughan, Carlisle, Marsden, Overbeck, Newman, Penrose, Kuhlman, Horne, Cloete, Walker-Leigh, Hon. de Saumarez, Thorold, Kitson, Vaghan.

Three squadrons under Captain Byng proceeded to the front to Natal, where they immediately distinguished themselves, while the remainder of the regiment went to the western border, and there took a full share of incessant work.

The Natal Mounted Police under Colonel Dartnell, "a genius, planner, and guide," did wonderful deeds in relation to the defence of Ladysmith and during the trying actions which preceded it. The gallant colonel, who has been described in action as being "as good as a brigade," placed his own horse at the disposal of General Symons, who was wounded, and saw him safely off the field at Glencoe.

The Natal Carabineers served splendidly both within and without Ladysmith, some of the force, under Lord Dundonald, being the first to relieve the town. Their fighting qualities are well known, and it is unnecessary to do more than quote the words of General Hunter, who said, "I never wish to serve with better men."

First-rate work has been done by the Frontier Mounted Rifles, a well-trained and excellently-equipped body of men, all in the prime of life, and drawn from the eastern border towns of the Cape Colony. They held a position of continual danger, being encamped nearest the enemy. Being born and bred among the kopjes which afforded the Boers such cosy hiding-places, they were acquainted with every nook and corner, and could find their way about them both in daylight and dark. This force, with the Cape Police, helped to keep General Gatacre informed regarding the seething mass of disloyalty that surrounded him. It was difficult to choose between the honest hostility of the Free Staters and the crafty antagonism of the rebel Dutchmen, who had joined the enemy almost to a man. These were known to be in active collusion with the foe, assisting them by spying, blowing up culverts, wrecking railway lines, and generally assisting in the development of the plots to sweep British rule from the soil of Africa. Loyal British subjects had much to suffer at the hands of these people, who spent their time carrying off and destroying furniture and valuables, smashing windows and doors, and damaging all property other than their own that they could lay hands on, and with these duplicit ruffians the British troops unaided by Colonials could never have been even. Besides the valuable services of the Frontier Mounted Rifles and the Cape Police, General Gatacre had under him four other regiments of Cape Colonials, who were all trying to outrival each other in nobility, pluck, and usefulness. Of many other regiments pages might be written, but space does not permit. In regard to the Imperial Light Horse, one sentence expressed by Sir George White speaks volumes. He said it was composed of the finest fighting material that he had ever had under his command.

THE IMPERIAL YEOMANRY

Early in the days of war Lord Lonsdale offered to take out to South Africa 200 men of the Westmoreland and Cumberland Yeomanry, of which he is colonel, and to fully equip and clothe them. Lord Harris and his regiment, the East Kent Mounted Rifles, also were among the first to volunteer for the front, and before that the Middlesex Yeomanry (the Duke of Cambridge's

The Transvaal War

Hussars) made a hurried application to go to the Transvaal, which impetuosity of loyalty was met by the War Office with courteous refusal. At that time the need for light cavalry in South Africa seemed scarcely to have dawned on the authorities. It was true that October mists and November fogs had enveloped London, and that no one between Downing Street and the Mansion House could see an inch before his nose, and it was equally true that by the time these mists had cleared away there was only one question, namely, "How many men could be sent abroad out of the 10,000 who constituted the Yeomanry Cavalry?"

Then, in December, the following announcement, with regulations to be observed in the organisation of a Contingent of Yeomanry and Volunteers, was published:—

YEOMANRY.—1. Her Majesty's Government have decided to raise for service in South Africa a mounted infantry force, to be named "The Imperial Yeomanry." 2. The force will be recruited from the Yeomanry, but Volunteers and civilians who may possess the requisite qualifications (as given below) will be specially enrolled in the Yeomanry for this purpose. 3. The force will be organised in companies of 115 rank and file, five officers being allotted to each company, viz., one captain and four subalterns, preference being given to Yeomanry officers. 4. The term of enlistment for officers and men will be for one year, or for not less than the period of the war. 5. The officers and men will bring their own horses, clothing, saddlery, and accoutrements. Arms and ammunition, camp equipment, and regimental transport will be provided by Government. 6. The men will be dressed in Norfolk jackets, of woollen material of neutral colour, breeches and gaiters, lace boots, and felt hats. Strict uniformity of pattern will not be insisted upon. 7. The pay will be at cavalry rates, with a capitation grant for horses, clothing, saddles, and accoutrements. All ranks will receive rations from date of joining. Gratuities and allowances will be those laid down in special army order of May 10, 1899. 8. Applications for enrolment should be addressed to colonels commanding Yeomanry regiments, or to General Officers commanding districts, to whom instructions will be immediately issued.

Qualifications.—(a) Candidates must be from twenty to thirty-five years of age and of good character. (b) Volunteers or civilian candidates must satisfy the colonel of the regiment through which they enlist that they are good riders and marksmen, according to Yeomanry standard. (c) The standard of physique to be that for cavalry of the line.

VOLUNTEERS.—Her Majesty's Government have decided to accept offers of service in South Africa from the Volunteers. A carefully selected company of 110 rank and file, officered by one captain and three subalterns, will be raised (one for each British line battalion serving in, or about to proceed to, South Africa) from the Volunteer battalions of the territorial regiment. These Volunteer companies will, as a general rule, take the place in the line battalion of its company, serving as mounted infantry. The Volunteer battalions from which a company is accepted will form and maintain a waiting company in reserve at home. The selection of men from the Volunteer battalions for service with the line battalion in the field, will devolve on the commanding officers of Volunteer battalions. The terms of enlistment for officers and men will be for one year, or for not less than the period of the war. Full instructions for the information of all concerned will be issued with the least possible delay through General Officers commanding districts.

A committee was formed to assist in organising the Yeomanry force, among



LONDON'S RESPONSE—THE CITY IMPERIAL VOLUNTEERS CROSSING WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

Drawing by Allan Stewart.

The Imperial Yeomanry

which were the following notable persons: Colonel Lord Chesham, Colonel A. G. Lucas, Colonel Viscount Valentia, Colonel the Right Hon. W. H. Long, M.P. Colonel the Earl of Lonsdale consented to assist the committee in the obtaining of horses. The following Acting Staff Officers were nominated to assist Colonel Lord Chesham: Captain the Hon. W. Bagot (late Scots Guards), Captain L. Sandwith (8th Hussars), Adjutant of the 2nd Yeomanry Brigade.

In a short, an almost incredibly short, space of time numerous battalions were in readiness, and a strong contingent from Ireland was raised, composed mainly of hunting men. The Under-Secretary for War wrote to correct the impression which prevailed in some quarters that the raising of funds by private subscriptions for the Volunteers and Imperial Yeomanry going to South Africa was promoted by Government in order to do work which ought to be done with Government money. He pointed out that the Government was bearing the whole cost of those forces, providing them directly with their pay, food, and arms, and, through their regiments, with clothing and equipments. But the Government allowance for these things was calculated on the regular army scale, and the public subscription would be serviceable in the way of making better provision in those directions for the local Volunteers and Yeomanry, of locally overcoming certain difficulties of organisation, and of decentralising a great deal of contracting for horses, saddles, clothing, &c. Why, they argued, should the man who volunteers his service in the field bear also all the cost of making himself efficient, and all the cost entailed by his absence from his trade or profession? Surely those who could not volunteer for the front will be glad to assist him, or his corps in this case, as they have assisted him or his corps in time of peace for forty years? Quantities of men of independent means throughout the country, a great many of whom were acquainted with each other, were ready and anxious to form a corps of the Imperial Yeomanry, messing and fighting together, and enduring the hardships and dangers of the trooper in emulation of the regular service man; and to this body of men the corps specially appealed. Though at first some 5000 men were called for, it was evident that 10,000 could have been recruited if needed. The magnificent example set by thousands of young men in humble stations of life, who left home and good employment courageously to serve their country, acted as a powerful incentive to their more fortunate brethren of means and leisure, and it was astonishing to find how readily all the members of the "upper ten" sacrificed themselves rather than be "out of it." Eventually the Duke of Cambridge's Own, the Special Corps, went to Africa, paying their own expenses. In this corps every trooper, equally with every other member of the Imperial Yeomanry, was entitled to a grant of £65 on joining, but all other expenses were defrayed by themselves, and even the pay received during the campaign was devoted to swell the Imperial War Fund for the widows and orphans of soldiers who had fallen in action. The cost of equipment of each recruit amounted to £170. The special purpose of the scheme was to attract men of social standing and education, and enable groups of friends to serve together in the same unit at the front. Among those who were enrolled was Lord Elphinstone; Mr. Geoffrey Malcolm Gathorne-Hardy, grandson of the Earl of Cranbrook; Captain Shaw; the Hon. Aubrey N. Molyneux Herbert (brother of the Earl of Carnarvon); the Hon. A. Hill-Trevor. Lord Lovat engaged himself actively in raising a corps of Highland gillies. In addition to the Government grant, magnificent contributions poured in for the full equipment of the corps. Lord Loch worked energetically in organising the South

The Transvaal War

African Contingent of the Imperial Yeomanry. These troops were formed only of men who had South African experience, and had seen service there.

The following is a list of the various battalions:—

1st Battalion (Colonel Challoner)—1st and 2nd Co. Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry; 4th Co. Glamorganshire Detachment; 3rd Co. Gloucestershire Yeomanry. 2nd Battalion (Colonel Burke)—32nd Co. Lancashire Hussars; 21st and 22nd Co. Cheshire Yeomanry; 5th Co. Warwickshire Yeomanry. 3rd Battalion (Colonel Younghusband)—9th Co. Yorkshire Hussars; 11th Co. Yorkshire Dragoons; 12th Co. South Notts; 10th Co. Notts (Sherwood Rangers). 4th Battalion (Colonel Blair)—7th Co. Leicestershire Yeomanry; 8th Co. Derbyshire Yeomanry; 6th Co. Staffordshire Yeomanry; 28th Co. Bedfordshire Detachment. 5th Battalion (Colonel Meyrick)—14th and 15th Co. Northumberland; 13th Co. Shropshire; 16th Co. Worcestershire. 6th Battalion (Colonel Burn)—17th Co. Ayrshire Yeomanry; 18th Co. Lanarkshire Yeomanry; 19th Co. Lothian and Berwickshire; 20th Co. Fife Light Horse. 7th Battalion (Colonel Helyar)—27th Co. Royal 1st Devon, Royal North Devon; 48th Co. North Somerset; 25th Co. West Somerset; 26th Co. Dorsetshire. 8th Battalion (Colonel Crawley)—23rd Co. Duke of Lancaster's Own; 51st and 52nd Co. Mr. Paget's Corps; 24th Co. Westmoreland and Cumberland. 9th Battalion (Colonel Howard)—29th Co. Denbighshire; 30th Co. Pembrokeshire; 31st and 49th Co. Montgomeryshire. 10th Battalion (Colonel Lord Chesham)—37th and 38th Co. Buckinghamshire; 39th Co. Berkshire; 40th Co. Oxfordshire. 11th Battalion (Colonel Wilson)—42nd Co. Hertfordshire; 43rd and 44th Co. Suffolk; 41st Co. Hampshire Carabineers. 12th Battalion (Colonel Mitford)—34th and 35th Co. Middlesex; 33rd Co. Royal East Kent; 36th Co. West Kent. 13th Battalion—54th and 56th Co. Irish (Belfast) Companies; 45th Co. Irish (Dublin) Company; 47th Co. Lord Donoughmore's Corps (Duke of Cambridge's Own). 14th Battalion (Lieut.-Colonel Brookfield)—55th Co. Northumberland; 53rd Co. Royal East Kent; 50th Co. Hampshire; 62nd Co. Middlesex. 15th Battalion (Lieut.-Colonel Sandwith)—56th and 57th Co. Bucks; 58th Co. Berks; 59th Co. Oxford. 16th Battalion (Lieut.-Colonel Ridley)—63rd Co. Wilts; 64th Co. Cheshire; 65th Co. Suffolk; 66th Co. York. 17th Battalion (Lieut.-Colonel Moore ?)—60th Co. North Irish, Belfast; 61st Co. South Irish, Dublin. 18th Battalion—67th, 70th, and 71st Co. Sharpshooters. 19th Battalion (Lieut.-Colonel Rodney ?)—69th Co. Sussex; 68th Co. Paget's Corps; 72nd Co. Rough Riders; 73rd Co. Paget's Corps.

Each battalion consisted of four companies of 116 each.

Colonel Viscount Downe, who was serving on Lord Roberts's staff in South Africa, was elected to command a brigade of the Imperial Yeomanry, and Lieutenant the Hon. R. F. Molyneux, Royal Horse Guards, was selected as his aide-de-camp.

Lord Dunraven's Battalion of Sharpshooters embarked for Africa to join the Rhodesian Force on the 6th of April. It was composed of four companies. The 67th, under the command of Captain Crum (late 52nd Regiment), was accompanied by Lieutenants Langford, Jones, Curley, and Dyke. The 75th, commanded by Major Warden (late Middlesex Regiment), was accompanied by Lieutenants Gabbett, Power, Warde, and Bosanquet. The 70th Company, comprising the Scottish Unit under Colonel Hill (late 12th Lancers), was accompanied by Lieutenants Clark, Torrance, Hotchkiss, and Andrews. The remaining company was commanded by Sir Savile Crossley.

The Earl of Dunraven, the founder of the corps, went to South Africa as Supernumerary Captain on the Battalion Staff.

The City Imperial Volunteers

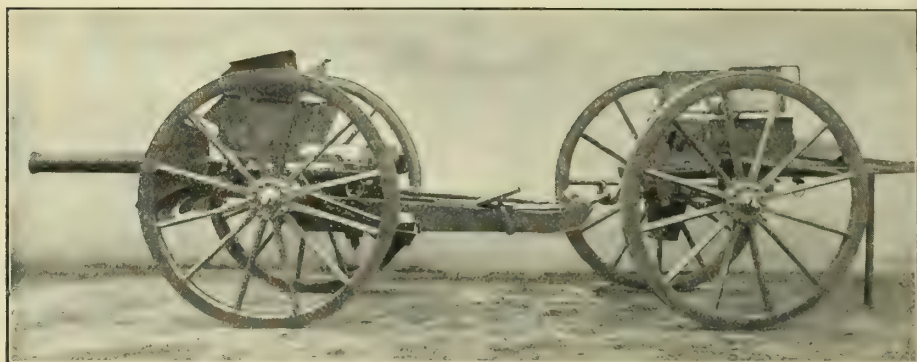
THE CITY IMPERIAL VOLUNTEERS

The announcement that the Government had decided to send to South Africa a force of Volunteers, was received with general delight by our civilian soldiers throughout the country. Here was a chance—a chance never before offered to earn distinction in the field; and here was an opportunity—most seasonable and appropriate, for the expression of public opinion, and for the display, the universal and effervescent patriotism that had found little chance of outlet in the prosaic walks of everyday life. The official intimation came as a surprise, and surprise in a few moments developed into unrestrained joy. The proposal to employ “a strong contingent of carefully selected Volunteers” was no sooner published than the War Office was besieged with applicants all eager to know what chance of being included in the great military movement might be available. A few weeks before the opening of Parliament Colonel Sir Howard Vincent volunteered “marksmen” for service in South Africa, and other colonels of Volunteer regiments followed suit. General Trotter (commanding the Home District) expressed a belief that the employment of Volunteers in the present crisis would demonstrate for all who should care to profit by the lesson the magnificent reserve force of civilian soldiers possessed by our nation, a force utterly ignored by Continental nations. This force was practically a force of picked men, selected marksmen who, unlike the “Regulars,” were all first-rate shots, and fit to cope with the skilled sharpshooters of the Boers. The marksmanship of many of the London corps of Volunteers has for many years been phenomenal, and it was said that in one company of the 13th Middlesex there were no less than sixty-three first-class shots out of eighty. Finally, it was decided that the “C.I.V.’s,” as they were called, should consist of 1400, and both corps sailed towards the end of January. Prior to their departure the Freedom of the City was conferred upon the officers of the regiment at the Guildhall, and later an impressive farewell service was held at St. Paul’s Cathedral. Their departure through London was somewhat difficult, owing to the dense and enthusiastic multitude that thronged the streets to see the last of them.

The Lord Mayor, Mr. Newton (now Sir A. J. Newton, Bart.), who was the moving spirit in the organisation of the corps, gave an excellent account of the splendid work that had been accomplished and of the prompt equipment and despatch of the regiment. This report concisely and modestly describes the enormous undertaking, though it does not sufficiently enlarge on the keen personal interest and magnificent services rendered by the prime mover in the great scheme. The Lord Mayor said: “From the moment when the Commander-in-Chief did me the honour of placing in my hands, as Chief Magistrate of the City of London, the organisation of a regiment of thoroughly qualified Volunteers for service in South Africa, I have been profoundly impressed with the responsibility of the trust, and the importance of every promise made on behalf of the Corporation and City of London being fulfilled in its integrity. The original promise was 1000 Metropolitan Volunteers, all recommended by their commanding officers, all between twenty and thirty-five years, all bachelors, and that at least 250 should be mounted. That was on the 20th of December (1899), and now, on the 3rd of February (1900), the City of London, with the approval of the military authorities, has completely equipped and despatched to the seat of war upwards of 1550 selected Volunteers, of whom 500 men and 17 officers are already in Cape Town—all approved by the General Officer commanding the Home District. Of these, 400 are mounted

The Transvaal War

infantry, having their saddlery with them, and their horses ready at the Cape. Four small Maxim guns, with 200,000 rounds of ammunition, have also been shipped. A highly trained battery of field artillery, mainly provided by the Honourable Artillery Company, through the zealous co-operation of the Earl of Denbigh, composed of 140 men and officers, left the Royal Albert Docks by the steamship *Montfort*. This section took with it four 12½-pounder quick-firing guns and ample ammunition, together with their full complement of 110 horses, purchased here, as they must be of a stouter type than the Cape horses. The City has also—which was not originally intended—provided the entire camp and tent equipment for the whole force when it leaves Cape Town, and, at the request of the authorities, done a good deal in the direction of land transport, without interfering with the responsibility of the Headquarters Staff in South Africa in respect of maintenance of the corps. The regiment constitutes a part of her Majesty's regular army. The officers and men are soldiers, and remain so during the campaign. The time has been very brief, but there has been neither hurry



12½-POUNDER QUICK-FIRING FIELD-GUN—CITY OF LONDON FIELD BATTERY.

By permission of Messrs. Vickers, Sons & Maxim, and the publishers of the *Engineer*.)

nor confusion, and the explanation of the successful results may be fairly summed up as follows: As soon as Lord Wolseley accepted my offer, made on behalf of the Corporation and City, I was in the position of an autocrat in this business, and the power of the purse was promptly placed at my disposal—in the first instance by the Corporation with its grant of £25,000, by the City Livery Companies, the large shipowners, bankers, merchants, the Honourable Artillery Companies, its members, and the citizens generally. The Metropolitan Volunteer commanding officers vied with each other as to who could send the most men, do the most work, and be the most useful. The result is that, with the exception of a few staff officers from the regular army, the officers of the City Imperial Volunteers are gentlemen engaged in civil pursuits, but who have spent years in efficiently performing their duties. The non-commissioned officers are most carefully picked from the vast band of qualified men holding the same or higher rank in their own Volunteer regiments, and every man of the rank and file has been expressly recommended by his commanding officer for the particular duty allotted to him. Several committees have dealt with sea and land transport, equipment, saddlery, and finance, and Volunteer commanding officers have served on all these. A committee of the

The City Imperial Volunteers

Honourable Artillery Company and the battery officers arranged the details of their own equipment without coming to the Mansion House for anything but the inevitable cheque. The selection of Colonel Mackinnon, A.A.G., Home District, as commandant was a very fortunate one for all concerned. Major-General Turner, C.B., R.A., has been constant in his attendance at the Mansion House, and always at hand when technical assistance was required. Major Freemantle and Lieutenant Grantham have been indefatigable, while my son as hon. secretary to, and Mr. A. D. Watson, a member of, the Equipment Committee, have gone to Cape Town as the connecting link for a short time between the regiment and its headquarters—the Mansion House. Colonel C. G. Boxall, C.B., on whose initiative I took up this work, has thoroughly and loyally fulfilled in every sense his promise to me to see this business completed, for which his admittedly great technical knowledge and his indomitable zeal in the Volunteer cause so eminently fit him. Mr. Abe Bailey, D.L. of the City, who from the first placed his services at my disposal, is acting as honorary agent of the regiment at Cape Town. He purchased over four hundred horses, and arranged for their being put in training and ready for the arrival of the first contingent, besides rendering other and invaluable aid. Several City firms have furnished contingents of their expert employees, whose services at the Guildhall in the preparation and distribution of “kits” have been of great assistance. The payment of accounts is now progressing, and at the first opportunity an audited statement of receipts and expenditure will be presented. In conclusion, I would state that the whole force has gone to the front with no burning desire for glory, but with a determination to do its duty, and with an intense loyalty and devotion to their beloved Sovereign.”

ROLL OF THE CITY OF LONDON IMPERIAL VOLUNTEERS.

Officers.—Infantry—Colonel, Earl of Albemarle; second in command, Lieutenant-Colonel A. G. Pawle; Adjutant, Captain the Hon. J. R. Bailey. A Company—Captain A. Reid; Lieutenant F. R. Jeffrey; Lieutenant E. D. Townroe. B Company—Captain C. W. Berkeley; Lieutenant B. W. Garnett; Lieutenant J. W. Cohen. C Company—Captain C. Matthey; Lieutenant the Hon. S. McDonnell, C.B.; Lieutenant E. Treffry. D Company—Captain F. J. Cousens; Lieutenant J. H. Smith; Lieutenant F. R. Burnside. E Company—Captain R. B. Shipley; Lieutenant W. J. P. Benson; Lieutenant F. B. Marsh. F Company—Captain W. Edis; Lieutenant P. F. Brown; Lieutenant S. H. Hole. G Company—Captain A. A. Howell; Lieutenant C. P. Grindle; Lieutenant P. Croft. H Company—Captain C. A. Mortimer; Lieutenant W. B. I. Alt; Lieutenant B. C. Green. Quartermaster, Captain S. Firth. Medical Officer, Surgeon-Captain E. St. V. Ryan. Staff—Colonel W. H. Mackinnon; Lieutenant E. H. Trotter; Transport Captain J. E. H. Orr; Paymaster Captain Triggs (late A. P. D.); Medical Officer, Surgeon-Captain R. R. Sleman; Veterinary Officer, W. S. Mulvey. Battery—Major G. McMicking; Captain E. C. Budworth; Lieutenant A. C. Lowe; Lieutenant H. Bayley; Lieutenant J. F. Duncan; Surgeon, Captain A. Thorne. Mounted Infantry—Colonel H. C. Cholmondeley; Adjutant Captain E. Bell; Quartermaster J. Ridler. Machine-Gun Section—Lieutenant E. V. Wellby. No. 1 Company—Captain J. W. Reid; Lieutenant G. Berry; Lieutenant W. H. Brailey; Lieutenant B. Moeller; Lieutenant C. H. W. Wilson. No. 2 Company—Captain J. F. Waterlow; Lieutenant A. Bailey; Lieutenant E. G. Concanon; Lieutenant A. H. Henderson; Lieutenant E. A. Manisty.

CHAPTER VIII

AT COLESBERG

THE troops with General French were in very fine fettle. They had no past history ; they were not damped by the remembrance of a Majesfontein, a Stormberg, or a Colenso. They had perfect confidence in their chief ; they had just enough hard work to keep their wits polished and their minds alert, and in the intervals there was sport of a kind for those who fancied it.

Fighting in and around Colesberg was incessant. The Boers were most stubborn in their determination to get rid of the British, and General French was equally stubborn in his determination to get rid of the Boers ! Colesberg was a situation to be desired, and both British and Boer forces fought desperately to hold it. It is situated some thirty-seven miles north of Naauwport, which is the junction of a branch line to De Aar. Between Naauwport and Colesberg are undulating pastures, and the town itself, which boasts a population of 1900 souls, possesses three—till lately—thriving hotels. In addition to these attractions it has for the Boers another—the attraction of being the birthplace of Oom Paul. Its capture would have mightily impressed the waverers in Cape Colony, consequently General French determined to celebrate the New Year by making another lunge at the enemy.

Early on Monday morning his troops took up a position upon the kopjes surrounding the town. His force, divided into two brigades commanded by Colonel Porter (Carabineers) and Colonel Fisher (10th Hussars), simultaneously attacked the Boer position.

The second brigade started from Rensburg at five on the previous afternoon, passed the night at Maider's farm, and in the small hours proceeded to their destination, the Boer position on Kul Kop, and seized the kopjes overlooking Colesberg on the west.

The advance was made on the Boer haunts at nine, and was greeted by a tornado from the surprised enemy, whose position extended for six miles round the entire village. Our artillery answered briskly, continuing a two hours' argument which had the result of effectually silencing the seven or eight Boer guns. (Curiously enough, on inspection, it was discovered that some of the Boer shells had been manufactured at the Royal Laboratory, Woolwich !)

Meanwhile the cavalry and horse-artillery were endeavouring

At Colesberg

to work round to the north of the enemy's position. The foe, ever nimble, was kept "on the trot." He was driven from hill to hill. Brilliantly the Berkshires, under Major M'Cracken, stormed a kopje to the west of Colesberg, occupying successive positions and pouring a torrent of lead on the enemy, who fled in disorder with loud shouts! Splendidly wheeled the cavalry, under Colonel Fisher, executing at the same time a flank movement and closing in round the Dutchmen, who had but time to flee. The enemy retired towards the west, followed always by the British, but owing to the peculiar disposition of the many kopjes in the vicinity the task of pursuing them was difficult. In their retreat towards Colesberg Junction they were hotly chased by the cavalry, and Colesberg itself was left almost in our hands.

On the 2nd of January an unfortunate accident occurred. A train within the British lines was mysteriously set in motion, and was carried by the impetus given to it in the direction of the Boer lines. It travelled slowly, but sufficiently fast to get out of reach, and as the machine was full of supplies, it was necessary to fire on and destroy it rather than allow the Boers to reap the reward of rebel treachery. The brakes were found to have been taken off the trucks, and a Dutchman was arrested on suspicion of having perpetrated the deed. At first an attempt was made to mend the trucks, the working party being supported by Carabineers and the Mounted Infantry; but these were bombarded by the Boers, and finally the trucks had to be fired to prevent the rations they contained, a quantity of rum, from falling into the hands of the enemy. The New South Wales Lancers under Major Lee, who were sent to the scene to avert looting by the foe, spent five hours under fire, holding the position and returning the fire with great gallantry.

The small force under General French's command at this time consisted of the Carabineers, 10th Hussars, Inniskilling Dragoons, O and R Batteries of Horse Artillery, the Berkshires and Suffolks, the New South Wales Lancers and New Zealanders. With this limited number he had worked wonders, driving the Dutchmen out from the kopjes immediately around Arundel, and forcing them continually to shift their position, a process which effectually deterred them from gaining ground. The Boer position now lay on long lines of kopjes to east and west of the rails, from Taaibosch Laagte to Rensburg; in the middle of the plain was the dumpling-shaped kopje known as Val Kop which the British had been forced to evacuate.

The enemy now prepared a little surprise. At daybreak on the 4th they made a sudden attempt to outflank the British position beyond Coleskop, westward of the town; thus hoping to reopen communications with the northern waggon bridge.

The Transvaal War

In General French's report of the day's work, he said: "The enemy was found to have established himself in strength at some hills running about east and west at right angles to the left rear of our position. The cavalry on the left should not have allowed him to do this unseen, but in turning him out they rendered signal service. The 10th Hussars, with two guns which I sent to them, threatened to take them in reverse, and they were heavily fired upon by the remaining four guns of O Battery in front. This caused several hundred to abandon the position, and the plain was covered with flying horsemen. The 10th Hussars on one flank, and a squadron of the Inniskillings on the other, dashed after them. The 10th Hussars were checked by some of the Boers taking up a strong position in some rocks to cover the retreat of the others. In a most gallant style Colonel Fisher dismounted his men and led them on foot against this position, which they carried with great boldness and intrepidity.

"In this daring operation, I regret to say, Major Harvey was killed, and Major Alexander severely wounded.

"The 6th Dragoons, led by Captain E. A. Herbert, showed no less dash, pursuing the enemy, mounted, and inflicting some loss with their lances. Some 200 of the enemy had, however, still clung to the hills, and after shelling them for some considerable time, both in front and flank, I decided to clear the position with the Mounted Infantry. Advancing under cover of the fire of the artillery, Captain De Lisle moved his men with great skill to a position where he could move against the enemy's right flank. Here he dismounted and advanced to attack, choosing the ground with admirable care. At this threat at least 100 more of the Boers took to flight in many small parties, the remainder endeavoured to check the Mounted Infantry advance. When one half the position was made good, a final exodus was made by the enemy, and twenty-one last remaining Boers surrendered. The Mounted Infantry suffered no casualties. This operation was most skilfully and boldly carried out by Captain De Lisle. It has been conclusively ascertained that on this day the enemy lost upwards of ninety killed and wounded, our casualties being six killed and fifteen wounded."

On the 5th of January, Lieutenant Sir John Milbanke, who went out with a patrol of five men on the plain north of Colesberg, came in touch with the enemy. The Boers galloped up to intercept the small British party, and Sir John Milbanke was slightly wounded in the thigh. This form of skirmish was an almost daily occurrence, for round the place was a species of Boer girdle. The Dutchmen, like flies—swept off at one moment to return the next—now buzzed in the hills within a mile radius from the town, while on the north, in the direction of the Free State, and in the east towards Aliwal

At Colesberg

and Burghersdorp, they remained in undisturbed possession of the country. To the north of Colesberg was a hill which practically commanded the road to Orange River, and also other roads leading to the town. That this hill should be in British possession was eminently desirable, and Colonel Watson conceived the idea that it might be easily taken and held by us. With General French's permission, on Friday, the 5th of January, he arranged an expedition, a midnight one, for the purpose of gaining the coveted position. He started forth at two o'clock on the morning of the 6th with four companies of the Suffolk Regiment. After marching stealthily in the darkness for about a mile, they reached the foot of the hill. This kopje had been often reconnoitred by various officers, and it was not due to any rashness on their part that a lamentable accident occurred. They marched through the dead of night to the top of the hill. In the morning twilight they were attacked by the enemy, who, aware of their design, was awaiting them. So completely had the troops fallen into a trap, that when the rifles blazed out they were at a distance of only thirty paces from the Dutchmen. The Colonel, who had halted to address the men, the Adjutant, and two other officers, were wounded before the Suffolks had found time to fire a single shot. Indeed, so quickly were they pounced on, that Colonel Watson, on giving orders to charge, fell riddled with bullets. Suddenly orders, none knew from whence, were given to "retire." Some said it was a ruse of the Boers. The rear fled back to the pickets, some thousand yards off, believing the order came from their officers; others—about a hundred and twenty officers and men—remained, refusing to budge. They fought bravely, but were eventually compelled to surrender. All were killed, wounded, or taken prisoners. Of eleven officers, but one remained! The Boers were evidently well-informed of the commanding officer's programme, and their tactics were so clever and combined that they contrived to create something of a panic when the unfortunate Suffolks, who thought themselves only preparing for attack, were definitely attacked. Critics sitting in judgment at home declared that ordinary precautions would have averted the chance of being entrapped, but others, who knew Kaffir ways and the condition of the country, where every keyhole was an ear and every leaf of a tree an eye, were inclined to marvel that so few disasters happened.

One of the officers writing of the affair said: "It is quite certain the Colonel never gave that order, or the officers would have retired too. They remained to a man, except Graham, who was wounded early, and could not hold his rifle. He dragged himself down the hill, and somehow crawled the two miles into camp. The Boers said those that were left charged three times and behaved splendidly. The position was impossible to take, even if a brigade had

The Transvaal War

attacked, although it had been carefully reconnoitred. The ditch, with the loopholed wall near the top of the hill, could only have been discovered by a balloon. The Colonel's last words were, 'Remember Gibraltar, my boys!' "¹

There was deep regret at the loss of this distinguished officer, and the whole force lamented the first check which this column had sustained. The enemy was shelled at intervals, so as to make his position as uncomfortable as possible, but the Boers still remained in possession of the route leading to the Free State by Achtertang. Soon the Essex Regiment was sent on to replace the 1st Suffolk, who went south to recruit their shattered forces.

Among the wounded officers was Major Graham; Lieutenants Wilkins, Carey, and White were killed. With those taken prisoners were Captains Brett, Thomson, Brown; Second Lieutenants Allen, Wood-Martin, and Butler. Of the men, 26 were killed, 45 wounded, and 72 taken prisoners or missing.

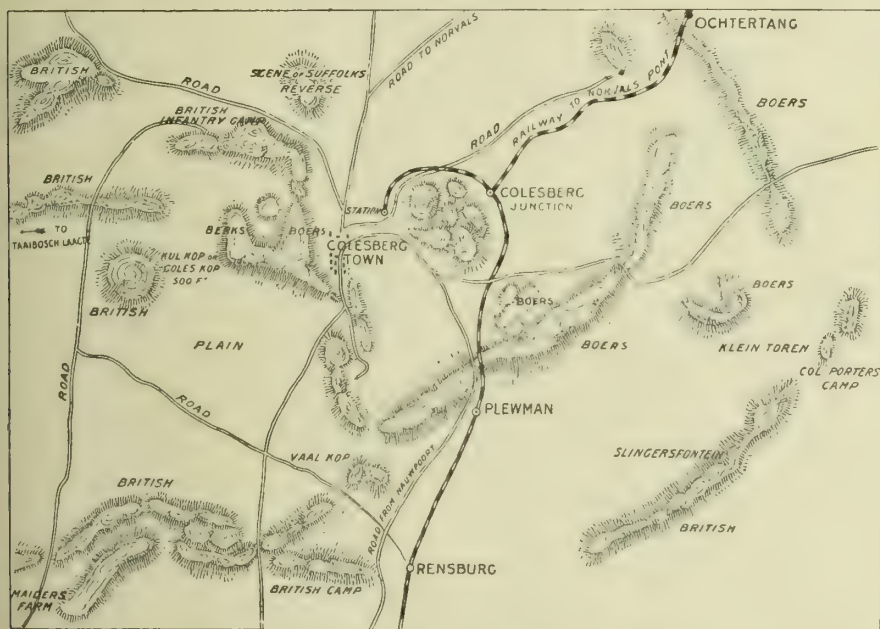
The British occupied Slingsfontein on the 9th of January. From this time Colonel Porter and his splendidly alert troops—the 5th Dragoons, New Zealanders and New South Wales Lancers—were busily occupied in keeping the enemy “on the run,” forcing him to leave one kopje after another, and maintaining harassing tactics which entirely upset the Dutchmen's calculations. Still the Boers were ubiquitous. They now held a strong position between Colesberg and Slingsfontein, from which with the small force at hand it was impossible to dislodge them. On the 13th, the inconvenience of the situation was rendered more intense by a perfect cyclone of dust which caused the utmost discomfort. Meals were also made impossible by the aggressive attacks of the enemy, who plumped shell after shell in the midst of the camp. Colonel Porter retired his troops to the cover of a neighbouring hill, while three squadrons of the 6th Dragoon Guards and four guns of O Battery, Horse Artillery, advanced across the plain and prepared to tackle the

¹ Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur John Watson was forty-six years of age. He entered the army as a sub-lieutenant of the 12th Foot (now the Berkshires) on August 9, 1873, and received his lieutenancy from the same date. He was instructor of musketry to the regiment from February 12, 1880, to January 24, 1883, received his company on the 14th of April following, and, passing the Staff College in 1884, served with the Bechuanaland Expedition under Sir Charles Warren later in the year, and from February 17 to October 28, 1885, was brigade-major in Bechuanaland, being honourably mentioned in dispatches. He was employed on staff service with the Egyptian army from February 12 to September 7, 1886, obtaining his major's commission on October 21 following; and in 1888 served in the Hazara Expedition as brigade-major to the first column under Brigadier-General Channer, when he was again mentioned in dispatches, and received the medal with clasp. From July 20, 1889, to February 20, 1896, he was garrison instructor in Bengal, and deputy assistant-adjutant-general for instruction in the Punjab, taking part in 1895 in the operations in the Chitral, accompanying the relief force under Sir Robert Low, acting as road commandant on the lines of communication. For his services in this campaign he received his second medal with clasp. He was gazetted lieutenant-colonel of the Suffolk Regiment on September 19, 1898.

At Colesberg

enemy. This was done with such celerity and decision that almost in five minutes the Boer guns were silenced and the enemy driven to cover. As a result of the prompt activities of our artillery, the Boer tents were removed eastwards.

These sandstorms, characteristic of the Veldt, were a terrible test to patience. At one moment the camp was an orderly array of mushroom tents springing decorously from the earth; in the next it was seemingly an animated mass of anthills trying to maintain life against an ochreous avalanche of dust. Occasionally when the cyclone of grit had ceased, it was followed by a hurricane of hail, accompanied by the gloom of night, the bellow of the blast and



POSITION AT COLESBERG ABOUT 20TH JANUARY.

growl of the thunder-claps fighting together in the hills. Then would the frightened cattle stampede, and the whole routine of military life become deranged. A rushing mob, a battle of the elements, a vast ditch irrigated with rivulets, bombardment by the big guns of the wind—such would be the programme for a good hour or so! Then, as often as not, the sun would suddenly come out and shine affably, with the placid, self-satisfied beam of dear old ladies when they've trumped their partner's best card of a long suit at whist!

After this, the routine of life would go on much as before, the Dutchmen clinging to their positions, and General French determining to make these as untenable as possible.

The Transvaal War

On the 15th the New Zealanders had an excellent opportunity of exhibiting their smartness and dash. The Boers made a stubborn attempt to seize a hill that practically commanded the country to east and west of their main position. This valuable eminence was held by a detachment of New Zealanders and D Company of the Yorkshire Regiment under Captain Orr. Early in the morning desultory firing began, and later the Boers, increasing the warmth of their fire, worked towards the right of the position held by the New Zealanders. At the same time they assailed the Yorkshires, directing their fire at a small wall held by them and forcing them to keep close cover. Gradually the Boers advanced, creeping towards the wall ever nearer and nearer. They then blazed furiously from their position on the slopes, killing the Sergeant-Major and wounding Captain Orr. At this time Captain Madocks, R.A. (attached to the New Zealand Mounted Rifles), and ten New Zealanders appeared on the scene, and, to the dismay of the Boers, the whole party with a dash and a yell leapt over the wall and charged down on their assailants with fixed bayonets. It was a splendid act, and one which, as the officer commanding the Yorkshires had dropped wounded, came just in time to save the situation.

Away rushed the enemy, rolling one over another in their effort to be off, while a sustained storm of bullets inflicted heavy loss on their retreating numbers. From the distance they made a feeble attempt to fire at the gallant fellows who had routed them, but eventually they retired to the small kopjes at the base of the contested hill. There they were saluted by a detachment of two guns of O Battery from the west of the kopje. The enemy's long-range gun now came into play and forced the British guns to move their position farther to the west. That done, the small kopjes were effectively shelled and the Dutchmen's fire silenced. The whole engagement was a signal success, and the Yorkshires and New Zealanders were well pleased with their share of the day's work. Twenty-one Boers were left dead on the field and many more were wounded. (On the morning of this day an unfortunate incident occurred at Colesberg. Lieutenant Thompson, R.H.A., while out scouting, was wounded and taken prisoner. This officer, together with Lieutenants Talbot Ponsonby, Lamont, and Aldridge, was especially mentioned for services performed with the guns.)

The events of the last few days had served to show that, however the Colonials might differ in their customs, habits, and ideas, they were assuredly identical in their dogged bravery and their fine spirit of dash—

“They come of The Blood, slower to bless than to ban,
Little used to lie down at the bidding of any man,”—

The Red Hill,
Key of the
Position.
Suffies were
driven back,
Lyddite Shell.

Philip-
town
Wagon
Road.

Charles Kop,
(Lyddite Shell
found in Boer
Laager for
Horses).

Boer
Station, Hospital.

Kopje on
Berkshires
divide
honours with
Lyddite Shell,
who are only
300 yards
away.

Coles-Nogel's Town
berg.
Junc-
tion, road, berg.

Coles-
min
Camp
(Boers).

Boer
Camp.

Shell
Coles re-captured
Kop, by Boers.

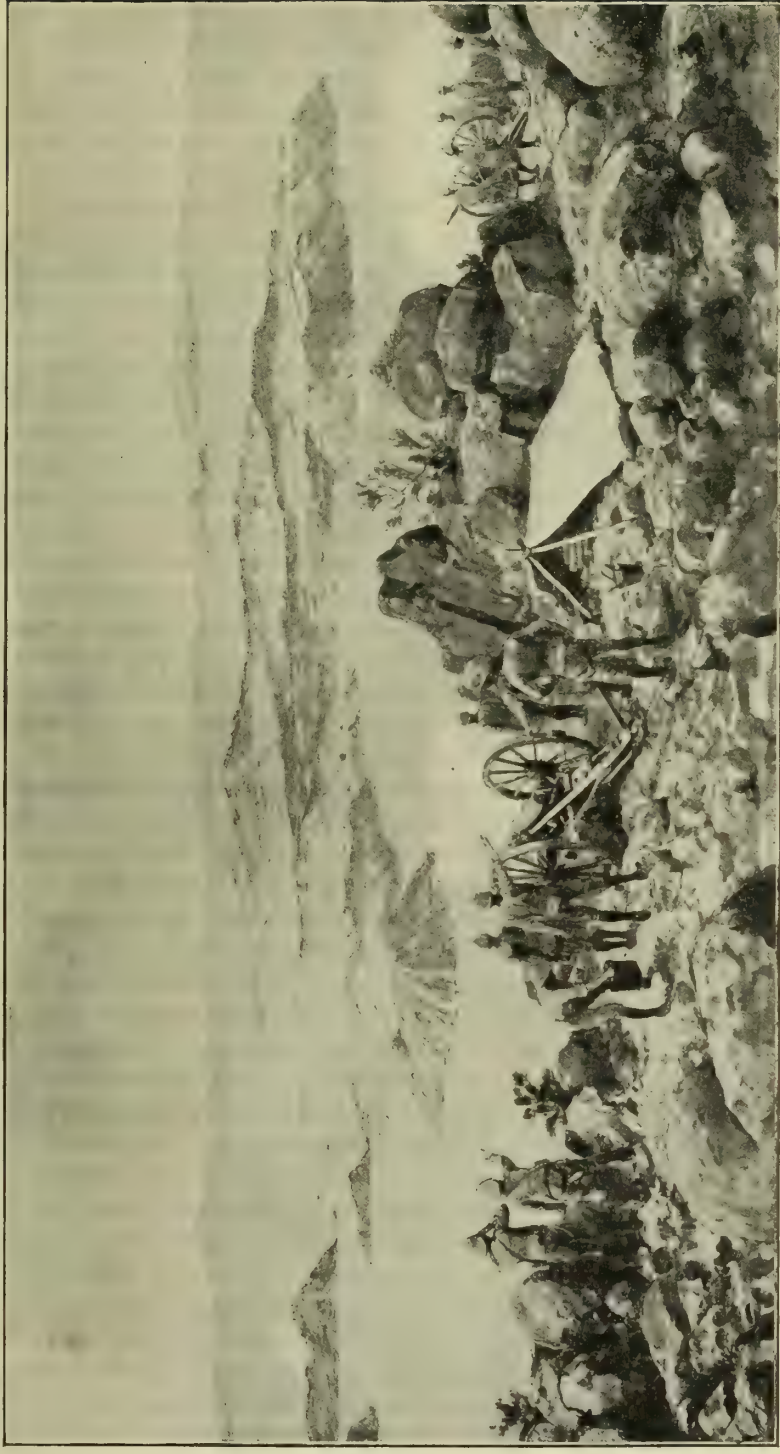
The
Blues' Hill,
taken by
the
Household
Company.

Slingers-
fontein,
Lyddite
Shell,
which Boer
Zaalanders
defended.

Porter's Hill,
British.
Lyddite Guns.

Plowman's
Farm.

Railway to
Rensburg.



General French.

GENERAL FRENCH'S REMARKABLE POSITION AT COLESBERG, AS SEEN FROM KUIL OR COLE'S KOP ABOUT 15TH JANUARY.

Sketch by Frederick Villiers, War Artist.

The Transvaal War

and Captain Madocks and his hardy New Zealanders had now the well-merited good fortune to have earned the esteem and appreciation of all who had seen their splendid rush to the rescue of the Yorkshires. On the 16th General French visited the New Zealanders' camp and congratulated them on their gallant conduct during the fight.

The Boers now brought to bear on the position one of the guns captured by them at Stormberg, and launched some ten shots into the kopjes held by a company of the Welsh Regiment. They got as good as they gave, and before long the enemy was completely silenced. General French's system was a tit-for-tat form of warfare, which failed to commend itself to the Dutchmen. It served well, however—in default of sufficient troops to make any definite advance—to hold the enemy from proceeding farther south in British territory. News now came in that a large force of Dutchmen had been transferred from Majesfontein for the purpose of reinforcing the Boer commandoes at Colesberg, and thus rendering the paralysis of the British complete.

A very serious disaster befell a patrol consisting partly of New South Wales Lancers and South Australian Horse, who had so nobly volunteered their services to the Mother Country at the beginning of the war. On the morning of the 16th of January a party of nineteen rode out from Colonel Porter's camp for the purpose of reconnoitring towards Ochtertang. It was not yet dawn, but they pursued their investigations, reaching Norval Camp without seeing any signs of the enemy. About 8 A.M. they commenced the return journey naturally with a feeling of greater security than when they started. They unfortunately fell into an ambush. A hot fight ensued, but the Boers were in overwhelming numbers, and the party was hard pressed. Two escaped to camp, and six more, after hiding till it was possible to make good their escape, followed them. The rest were made prisoners, but not without a struggle, as the bodies of four dead Australian and seven dead Boer horses, left on the field, served to testify. Lieutenant Dowling was killed. The enemy now occupied Klein Toren to the north of Slingersfontein.

On the 18th inst. Major-General Clements, D.S.O., arrived with two regiments of the 12th Brigade (the Royal Irish and the Worcestershire), and was placed in command of all the troops at and east of Slinger's Farm. Two battalions were posted at that place, and occupied a good commanding position, which had been well fortified and intrenched.

General Clements had also, at Slinger's, one company New Zealand Mounted Rifles; one squadron and four guns. Colonel Porter, 6th Dragoon Guards, with four squadrons, two guns, and one company of infantry, was posted at a farm called Potfontein,

At Colesberg

some eight miles east, and a little south, of Slinger's. The enemy's force at Colesberg was now hemmed in on the west, south, and east, and their position began to look uncomfortable, particularly as a battery firing lyddite shells was at hand to assist in the British operations. The British now held a series of positions of great extent, shaped after the manner of a mark of interrogation, with Colesberg within the curve of the hook.

The distance to be covered between the camps on the east and west flanks was about sixteen miles. Supplies were conveyed by waggons drawn by mules of South African breed—sleek, and as a rule good-tempered beasts. The South American mules were of a weaklier stamp, their poor condition being the result of importation. The tracks through the veldt, called by courtesy roads, were now in many places a foot deep in dust wherever sand-drifts had been lodged, and these promised in the event of rain to develop into morasses.

On the 25th General French made a reconnaissance in person, and discovered that the enemy was strongly posted at Rietfontein. The reconnaissance occupied two days, during which the troops covered forty miles. In spite of many efforts to cut the Boer's communications with the Free State the Boers outwitted him, or rather out-dodged him, and retained their hold on Colesberg. Their position consisted of commanding hills down a defile through which a spruit flows towards the Orange River. The windings of this stream are followed by Waggon Road for more than a mile, then, after passing the hills, it flows over undulating country towards the river.

On Saturday, the 27th, a melancholy incident took place. For some weeks Major MacCracken had been holding a hill close up to the Boer position, and on this particular morning, though no fighting was taking place, a shell was plumped upon the hill by the enemy with the result that an officer was wounded. A New Zealander named Booth, orderly to General Clements, was killed while holding the General's horse. At this time General French had mysteriously disappeared. His destination, though not announced, was Cape Town, where he went on a visit to Lord Roberts, whose plans were rapidly approaching completion. The upshot of that momentous visit we shall discover anon.

LORD ROBERTS'S ADVANCE

At Modder River Lord Methuen, to encourage the performers in a series of inter-regimental boxing matches, offered three splendid challenge cups for competition. These were won by the Scots Guards, the Grenadier Guards, and the Argyll and Sutherland

The Transvaal War

Highlanders respectively, on the 3rd of February, when the series came to an exciting conclusion.

Meanwhile, when the cat was away the mice could play. The Boers engaged in their usual game of destroying railway tracks between Modder Camp and Langeberg, and as many as thirty-three explosions were heard, which portended considerable damage to line and culverts. However the trains conveying the sick to hospital at the Cape got away in safety, and as many invalids as possible were despatched to the base in order that the advance movement, when it should commence, would not be hampered.

The junction of De Aar at this time was simmering with activity. Stores to the value of a million pounds were being accumulated in preparation for a gigantic move in the direction of Modder River. Though at the moment Lord Roberts's plans were not generally known, it was certain that a vast number of troops—many more than those then under Lord Methuen's command—were about to congregate in the neighbourhood of Orange River, and in consequence there was suppressed excitement among the British and corresponding trepidation among the Free Staters. General French, whose splendid activity had been going on in most trying circumstances, now found himself freed to begin operations on a scale more fitted to his talents and more congenial to them. Cavalry was pouring in, and with cavalry and such a commander there was immense cause for hope.

The Suffolks who, after their disaster at Colesberg, went to Port Elizabeth to recruit their forces, now came up to De Aar, and were re-officered prior to being sent to the front. Other regiments were also trickling in, and slowly disposing of themselves in positions previously arranged by Lord Roberts at the Cape. All these dispositions were made with intense secrecy, Lord Kitchener setting himself to work to reorganise the transport department in such a manner as to make all the complicated moves of the coming war game possible.

Life at Modder River began to grow correspondingly animated. Experiments in the working of the Marconi wireless telegraphy were set on foot, and other active preparations for decisive combat were pushed forward. The Boers were busy too. They were making further trenches in front of the Majesfontein ridge with a view to still further strengthening their position, an exertion which they subsequently found to be somewhat unnecessary. They also swelled their numbers. From the report of deserters it seemed that President Steyn had drawn to his banner many reluctant farmers by means of false representations, he having circulated the report that the British meant to seize and confiscate property for the purpose of enriching their own soldiers after the war. The Canadian Regi-



WITH GENERAL FRENCH: NEW ZEALANDERS SAVING A PICKET OF THE YORKSHIRE REGIMENT NEAR
SLINGERSFONTEIN ON JANUARY 15.

Drawing (by W. Small from a Sketch by G. D. Giles.

Lord Roberts's Advance

ment, who till then had been guarding the lines of communication, moved to the front. They were in great spirits, and much rejoiced at being allowed to take a more active share in operations.

The Australian Infantry Regiment was now to be mounted. It was a misfortune that the Australians were not mounted from the first, as all were good horsemen, and would have come in handy to assist the British cavalry in the work of reconnaissance, which the mobile nature of Boer movements rendered unusually hard. The companies were composed of about 125 men from Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, West Australia, and Tasmania respectively.

On the 6th of February Lord Roberts left Cape Town for the front. He stopped *en route* at Belmont. Every eye was turned to him as he alighted at the railway station. It was nine o'clock, and presently a crowd collected to view the two warriors on whom the British Empire pinned its faith. One was the smallest man in the station; the other was the largest. The Field-Marshal, neat as a new pin, with his refined visage, grey moustache and tufted imperial, looked young, even happy, and undisturbed by his responsibilities; the hero of Omdurman, large and broad-shouldered, his forage cap crammed on his head, his keen steel-tinted eyes piercing the heart of things at a glance, appeared stern and preoccupied. They were met by Colonel Otter, and the Field-Marshal at once asked to see the Canadians. Colonel Otter accordingly brought him to the main guard, which consisted of one sergeant, one corporal, and two men. One of these described the inspection by the august chief. "We were standing at the present, and Lord Roberts appeared to be sizing us up pretty well. He inquired how we liked our bandoliers for cartridges, and on Sergeant Ellard informing him that they were too loose, and that the cartridges fell out of them, Lord Roberts said that he would see that this was remedied. Lord Roberts presented Sergeant Ellard with a basket of roses, and on distribution of them I received one." This flower was treasured and sent home to the trooper's family in remembrance of the great day which brought him face to face with England's grandest soldier. On the 9th the Chief arrived at Modder River. At this time General Macdonald and the Highland Brigade were keeping the Boers occupied on the west, and during this manœuvre tremendous activities were set on foot. For instance, while General Macdonald's Brigade was marching back to camp on the 10th of February, a force consisting of 23,000 infantry, 11,000 mounted men, and 48 guns, with transport of some 700 waggons, drawn by 9000 mules and oxen, was approaching the Free State! A brigade of Mounted Infantry under Colonel Hannay was moving from Orange River to Ramdam, situated about eight miles from Jacobsdal. On the 11th, Boers were discovered inter-

The Transvaal War

cepting the road and holding the hills, but these, with a detached part of Colonel Hannay's force, were held where they were, while the main body with the baggage pushed on to their destination. On the 12th General French—who was now for the first time since his departure from Ladysmith, in command of a cavalry division—seized the crossing of the Riet River at Dekiel's Drift, whereupon the 6th and 7th Divisions there encamped themselves.

Before going further, it is necessary to follow the movements of the Highland Brigade, movements which materially assisted the development of the intricate plan of advance.

"FIGHTING MAC" AT KOODOESBERG

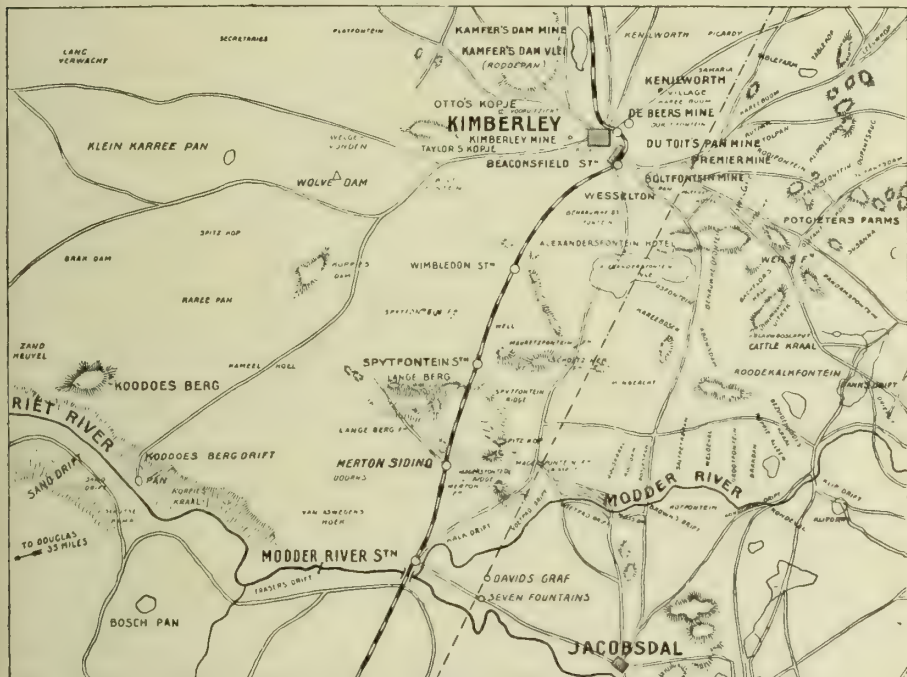
The Boers were now threatening the line between the Orange and Modder Rivers, and in consequence of various reports regarding their movements Colonel Broadwood proceeded to Sunnyside with the Royal Horse Artillery, Mounted Infantry, and Roberts's Horse, the newly-raised regiment from whom great things were expected. The enemy retired and crossed the Riet River, taking care to keep well out of the way, for it was known that "Fighting Mac" was on the warpath, and the last thing the rebels desired was to find their own line of communications interrupted.

On the 3rd of February General Macdonald with the Highland Brigade, 9th Lancers, 9th and 62nd Batteries Royal Field Artillery, moved out in a westerly direction with a view to blocking the main drift at Koodoesberg, and thus preventing a force reported to be coming from Griqualand West from joining that coming from the north for the purpose of cutting Lord Methuen's line of communication. There was also another motive for the movement, and that was to attract the attention and energy of the enemy while Lord Roberts was arranging for a decisive stroke in another quarter. The march was a trying one owing to the tropical temperature, exposure to a scorching sun, and the perpetual inconvenience of dust. The troops, however, bore it bravely. They bivouacked at Fraser's Drift, and on the following (Sunday) morning moved forward to Koodoesberg. The distance—some thirteen miles—was covered, again in sweltering conditions, over a shadeless expanse of rough road, which reflected the glare of the heavens and threw out hot rays as from a baker's oven. Men dropped continually from sunstroke, and exhaustion, and thirst; but, fortunately, owing to the near proximity of the river, there were few serious cases. The troops arrived at their destination about one o'clock, without having seen any Boers. On reaching the drift the men refreshed themselves by bathing in the river, a luxury in which they revelled. But repose was short. A hurried meal of bully beef and biscuits and they were at work again, providing for

“Fighting Mac” at Koodoesberg

contingencies. Two thousand yards off were a group of kopjes, behind which it was said some 4000 Boers were hiding.

The General at once set himself to construct breastworks to protect the drift and secure his positions on north and south of the river, while the 9th Lancers and their scouts reconnoitred the surrounding country to ascertain the strength and disposition of the enemy. They came on a small picket of Boers—there was a rapid exchange of shots—but on the nearer approach of our troops the Boers fled.



MAP ILLUSTRATING THE MOVEMENT TO KOODOESBERG.

On Monday both sides of the river were taken possession of. A large body of mounted Boers were seen advancing about 2000 yards off, but beyond firing a few shots at the British force no serious conflict took place. On Tuesday there was a smart race between our men and a large force of Boers advancing from their laagers. Both parties made for a big kopje, which was cleverly gained by the British after a breathless scramble. The enemy, worsted, galloped off, pursued by the Lancers.

At nine o'clock on Wednesday, the 7th, the Boers, who had engaged themselves in dragging a heavy gun to the scene of action, began to blaze out upon the Seaforth Highlanders. These, with alacrity, sprang to action. As a private said, "It was not a Majesfontein affair this time, and a holy joy filled our hearts at the prospect

The Transvaal War

of having a little bit of our own back." The enemy was established at the north end of Koodoesberg, whence they shelled the works that were being constructed to protect the drift. At the drift were seven companies of Highland Light Infantry. On the left bank were the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, half a battalion of Seaforths, two guns, and the 9th Lancers observing both flanks. Holding the south end of Koodoesberg on the right bank of the river were the Black Watch, half a battalion of Seaforths, one company of Highland Light Infantry, and four guns (62nd Field Battery). An animated battle ensued, and the British guns did splendid execution. The troops took cover behind hastily-constructed sangars, and the bullets of the enemy failed to touch them. There were no evidences of the celebrated Boer marksmanship on this occasion. The enemy pounded the hill with shrapnel, and made a ferocious effort to rout the Highlanders from their position. The 62nd Field Battery, after some smart cannonading, which was as effective as it was vigorous, forced the Dutchmen to shift their gun to a position farther north. Eventually the weapon of the Dutchmen was silenced altogether.

Meanwhile, at the request of General Macdonald, General Babington, with his own regiment of cavalry (12th Lancers) and two batteries of Horse Artillery, had been despatched from Modder River. They started at 11.30 A.M. on the 7th, and had they arrived in time might have cut off the retreat of the enemy and entirely hemmed them in.

As it was, they marched along the north side of the Modder, and only arrived at four o'clock, in time, however, to quickly pursue the foe in his retreat northwards, which retreat had been begun with all speed on the first hint of the coming of an additional force. The sufferings endured by some of the cavalry were intense, and one man expired through exposure and thirst. Others were in pitiable plight, but finally recovered.

While the great struggle was taking place it was discovered that the enemy was intrenched at a small drift on the west. Whereupon two companies of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders became engaged in a smart skirmish, and gave the Federals so warm a time that by nightfall, after being shelled in their trenches, they were glad enough to slink off. By morning the enemy had entirely evacuated their position, and not a vestige of them was to be seen. Had the cavalry not been utterly worn out on reaching the scene of action, the Dutchmen would have been caught before they had time to seek refuge in flight.

The troops then, under orders from Lord Methuen, retired to Modder River. They started from Koodoesberg on the evening of Thursday, made a moonlight march to Fraser's Drift, returning



"FIGHTING MAC" AND THE HIGHLAND BRIGADE IN ACTION AT KOODOESBERG.

From a Sketch by Lester Ralph.

“Fighting Mac” at Koodoesberg

to camp footsore and dilapidated on Friday. But before leaving, the officers and men who fell in the action were buried on the south bank of the river. Among them was Captain Blair, who, after having been previously struck by a bullet, had been mortally wounded by a shell. Lieutenant Tait, a very gallant officer, a notable golfer, and a general favourite, also fell, and Captain Eykyn eventually died of his injuries.

General Macdonald's reconnaissance at Koodoesberg Drift was entirely satisfactory. The position there was important, as it prevented Boer reinforcements from passing *via* the chief drift from Douglas to Majesfontein, and the movement served to confound the enemy, and protect the operations of the Belmont garrison in the direction of Douglas, not to speak of its value in keeping Boer activities to the west of Majesfontein at the time when Lord Roberts was developing his plans in regard to the east of that place. The enemy had been kept amused and out of mischief, and been wholesomely trounced into the bargain!

The casualties, which were comparatively few, were as follows:—

Killed:—2nd Royal Highlanders—Captain Eykyn; Lieutenant Tait. 2nd Seaforth Highlanders—Captain Blair.

Wounded:—2nd Seaforth Highlanders—Captain Studdert, A.S.C. 1st Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders—Captain Kirk. 9th Lancers—Second Lieutenant Cavendish; Lieutenant Mackenzie, R.A.M.C.

APPENDIX

THE STORY OF SPION KOP.

A great deal of consternation and not a little surprise was caused by the publication of the official account (*London Gazette*, April 16, 1900) of the evacuation of Spion Kop. In order to make intelligible the causes of the terrible fiasco it is necessary to quote for the benefit of those interested not only Lord Roberts's comments on the subject, but the statements of the officers concerned. Sir Redvers Buller, writing from Spearman's Hill, January 30, 1900, gave his version of the proceedings :—

"I have the honour to report that General Sir Charles Warren's Division having arrived at Estcourt, less two battalions 10th Brigade, which were left at the Cape, by the 7th January, it moved to Frere on the 9th.

"The column moved as ordered, but torrents of rain fell on the 9th, which filled all the spruits, and, indeed, rendered many of them impassable for many hours. To forward supply alone took 650 ox waggons, and as in the 16 miles from Frere to Springfield there were three places at which all the waggons had to be double spanned, and some required three spans, some idea may be formed of the difficulties; but these were all successfully overcome by the willing labours of the troops.

"The 4th Brigade reached Springfield on the 12th in support of the mounted troops, who had surprised and seized the important position of Spearman's Hill, commanding Potgieter's Drift, on the 11th.

"By the 13th all troops were at Springfield and Spearman's Hill, and supply was well forward.

"On the 16th a reserve of seventeen days' supply having been collected, General Sir Charles Warren, in command of the 2nd Division, the 11th Brigade of the 5th Division, the Brigade Division Royal Field Artillery, 5th Division, and certain corps troops, including the Mounted Brigade, moved from Springfield to Trichardt's Drift, which is about six miles west of Potgieter's.

"I attach Sir Charles Warren's report of his operations.

"On the night of the 23rd General Warren attacked Spion Kop, which operation he has made the subject of a special report. On the morning of the 25th, finding that Spion Kop had been abandoned in the night, I decided to withdraw General Warren's force; the troops had been continuously engaged for a week, in circumstances entailing considerable hardships; there had been very heavy losses on Spion Kop. I consequently assumed the command, commenced the withdrawal of the ox and heavy mule transports on the 25th: this was completed by midday the 26th; by double spanning, the loaded ox waggons got over the drift at the rate of about eight per hour. The mule waggons went over the pontoon bridge, but all the mules had to be taken out and the vehicles passed over by hand. For about seven hours of the night the drift could not be used as it was dangerous in the dark, but the use of the pontoon went on

The Story of Spion Kop

day and night. In addition to machine guns, six batteries of Royal Field Artillery and four howitzers, the following vehicles were passed: ox waggons, 232; 10-span mule waggons, 98; 6-span, 107; 4 span, 52; total, 489 vehicles. In addition to these the ambulances were working backwards and forwards evacuating the sick and wounded.

"By 2 P.M. the 26th all the ox waggons were over, and by 11.30 P.M. all the mule transports were across and the bridge clear for the troops. By 4 A.M. the 27th all the troops were over, and by 8 A.M. the pontoons were gone and all was clear. The troops had all reached their new camps by 10 A.M. The marches averaged for the mounted troops about seven miles, and for the infantry and artillery an average of five miles.

"Everything worked without a hitch, and the arrangements reflected great credit on the Staff of all degrees; but I must especially mention Major Irwin, R.E., and his men of the Pontoon Troop, who were untiring. When all men were over, the chesses of the pontoon bridge were so worn by the traffic that I do not think they would have lasted another half-hour."

He concluded by saying:—

"Thus ended an expedition which I think ought to have succeeded. We have suffered very heavy losses, and lost many whom we can ill spare; but, on the other hand, we have inflicted as great or greater losses upon the enemy than they have upon us, and they are, by all accounts, thoroughly disheartened; while our troops are, I am glad and proud to say, in excellent fettle."

Sir Charles Warren's report addressed to the Chief of the Staff, ran thus:—

"On the 8th January field orders were published constituting the 10th Brigade of the 5th Division a Corps Brigade, and placing the 4th Brigade in the 5th Division. The 5th Division thus constituted marched from Frere on the 10th instant, arriving at Springfield on the 12th instant.

"On the 15th January I received your secret instructions to command a force to proceed across the Tugela, near Trichardt's Drift to the west of Spion Kop, recommending me to proceed forward, refusing my right (namely) Spion Kop, and bringing my left forward to gain the open plain north of Spion Kop. This move was to commence as soon as supplies were all in, and the 10th Brigade (except two companies) removed from Springfield Bridge to Spearman's Hill.

"I was provided with four days' rations with which I was to cross the Tugela, fight my way round to north of Spion Kop, and join your column opposite Potgieter's.

"On the 15th January I made the arrangements for getting supplies, and moved the 10th Brigade on the following day, and on the evening of the 16th January I left Springfield with a force under my command, which amounted to an Army Corps (less one Brigade), and by a night march arrived at Trichardt's Drift, and took possession of the hills on the south side of the Tugela.

"On the 17th January I threw pontoon bridges across the Tugela, passed the infantry across by ponts, and captured the hills immediately commanding the drift on the north side with two brigades commanded by Generals Woodgate and Hart. The Commander-in-Chief was present during part of the day, and gave some verbal directions to General Woodgate.

"The Mounted Brigade passed over principally by the drift, and went over

The Transvaal War

the country as far as Acton Homes, and on the following day (18th) had a successful action with a small party of Boers, bringing in 31 prisoners.

"During the night of the 17th, and day of the 18th, the whole of the waggons belonging to the force were brought across the Tugela, and the artillery were in position outside of Wright's Farm.

"On the 19th two brigades advanced, occupying the slopes of the adjoining hills on the right, and the waggons were successfully brought to Venter's Spruit.

"In the evening, after having examined the possible roads by which we could proceed, I assembled the General Officers and the Staff, and the Officer Commanding Royal Artillery, and Commanding Royal Engineer, and pointed out to them that of the two roads by which we could advance, the eastern one by Acton Homes must be rejected, because time would not allow of it, and with this all concurred. I then pointed out that the only possible way of all getting through by the road north of Fair View would be by taking three or four days' food in our haversacks, and sending all our waggons back across the Tugela, but before we could do this we must capture the position in front of us.

"On the following day, 20th January, I placed two brigades and six batteries of artillery at the disposal of General Sir C. F. Clery, with instructions to attack the Boer positions by a series of outflanking movements, and by the end of the day, after fighting for twelve hours, we were in possession of the whole part of the hills, but found a strongly-intrenched line on the comparatively flat country beyond us.

"On the 21st the Boers displayed considerable activity on our left, and the Commander-in-Chief desired me to move two batteries from right to left. At a subsequent date, during the day, I found it impossible to proceed without howitzers, and telegraphed for four from Potgieter's. These arrived early on the morning of the 22nd, and the Commander-in-Chief, arriving about the same time, directed me to place two of these howitzers on the left, two having already been placed on the right flank. I pointed out to the Commander-in-Chief that it would be impossible to get waggons through by the road leading past Fair View, unless we first took Spion Kop, which lies within about 2000 yards of the road. The Commander-in-Chief agreed that Spion Kop would have to be taken. Accordingly that evening orders were drawn up giving the necessary instructions to General Talbot Coke to take Spion Kop that night, but, owing to an absence of sufficient reconnaissance, he requested that the attack might be put off for a day.

"On the 23rd January the Commander-in-Chief came into camp, the attack on Spion Kop was decided upon, and Lieut.-Colonel àCourt, of the Headquarter Staff, was directed by the Commander-in-Chief to accompany General Woodgate, who was detailed to command the attacking column. The account of the capture of Spion Kop is given in another report.

"On the morning of the 25th January the Commander-in-Chief arrived, decided to retire the force, and assumed direct command. The whole of the waggons of the 5th Division were got down to the drift during the day, and were crossed over before 2 P.M. on the 26th January."

In regard to the Council of War, Sir Charles Warren amplified his previous statement :—

"Upon the 19th of January, on arrival at Venter's Laager, I assembled all the General Officers, Officers Commanding Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers of Divisions, and Staff Officers, together. I pointed out to them that, with the

The Story of Spion Kop

three and a half ($3\frac{1}{2}$) days' provisions allowed, it was impossible to advance by the left road through Acton Homes. In this they unanimously concurred. I showed them that the only possible road was that going over Fair View through Rosalie, but I expressed my conviction that this could not be done unless we sent the whole of our transport back across the Tugela, and attempted to march through with our rations in our haversacks—without impedimenta."

Sir Charles then added :—

"The hills were cleared on the following day, and very strong intrenchments found behind them. The Commander-in-Chief was present on the 21st and 22nd January, and I pointed out the difficulties of marching along the road, accompanied by waggons, without first taking Spion Kop.

"Accordingly, on the night of the 22nd, I ordered General Coke to occupy Spion Kop. He, however, desired that the occupation might be deferred for a day in order that he might make a reconnaissance with the Officers Commanding battalions to be sent there.

"On 23rd January the Commander-in-Chief came into camp, and told me that there were two courses open—(1) to attack, (2) to retire. I replied that I should prefer to attack Spion Kop to retiring, and showed the Commander-in-Chief my orders of the previous day.

"The Commander-in-Chief then desired that I should put General Woodgate in command of the expedition, and detailed Lieutenant-Colonel àCourt to accompany him as Staff Officer.

"The same evening General Woodgate proceeded with the Lancashire Fusiliers, the Royal Lancaster Regiment, a portion of Thorneycroft's Horse, and half-company Royal Engineers, supported by two companies of the Connaught Rangers and by the Imperial Light Infantry, the latter having just arrived by Trichardt's Drift.

"The attack and capture of Spion Kop was entirely successful. General Woodgate, having secured the summit on the 24th, reported that he had intrenched a position and hoped he was secure, but that the fog was too thick to permit him to see. The position was rushed without casualties other than three men wounded.

"Lieutenant-Colonel àCourt came down in the morning and stated that everything was satisfactory and secure, and telegraphed to the Commander-in-Chief to that effect. Scarcely had he started on his return to headquarters when a heliogram arrived from Colonel Crofton (Royal Lancaster). The message was, 'Reinforce at once, or all lost. General dead.'

"He also sent a similar message to headquarters. I immediately ordered General Coke to proceed to his assistance, and to take command of the troops. He started at once, and was accompanied by the Middlesex and Dorsetshire Regiments.

"I replied to Colonel Crofton, 'I am sending two battalions, and the Imperial Light Infantry are on their way up. You must hold on to the last. No surrender.'

"This occurred about 10 A.M.

"Shortly afterwards I received a telegram from the Commander-in-Chief, ordering me to appoint Lieutenant-Colonel Thorneycroft to the command of the summit. I accordingly had heliographed, 'With the approval of the Commander-in-Chief, I place Lieutenant-Colonel Thorneycroft in command of the summit, with the local rank of Brigadier-General.'

The Transvaal War

"For some hours after this message I could get no information from the summit. It appears that the signallers and their apparatus were destroyed by the heavy fire.

"I repeatedly asked for Colonel Thorneycroft to state his view of the situation. At 1.20 P.M. I heliographed to ascertain whether Colonel Thorneycroft had assumed command, and at the same time asked General Coke to give me his views on the situation on Spion Kop. Still getting no reply, I asked whether General Coke was there, and subsequently received his view of the situation. He stated that, unless the Artillery could silence the enemy's guns, the men on the summit could not stand another complete day's shelling, and that the situation was extremely critical."

Later on in the evening arrangements were made to send two (Naval) 12-pounders, and the Mountain Battery, Royal Artillery, to the summit, together with half-company Royal Engineers (and working parties, two reliefs of 600 men each), to strengthen the intrenchments and provide shell cover for the men. The 17th Company, Royal Engineers—it must be noted—proceeded at the same time as General Woodgate's force, and were employed until daylight upon the intrenchments, then upon road-making and water supply.

Sandbags were sent up early on the 24th instant, but they were too late. Colonel Sim and his party, while ascending, met Colonel Thorneycroft descending the hill. The position was evacuated. Sir Charles Warren concluded thus:—

"I wish to bring to notice that I heard from all but one expression of the admirable conduct and bravery shown by officers and men suffering under a withering artillery fire on the summit of the slopes, and also of those who, with so much endurance, persisted in carrying up water and food and ammunition to the troops during the day.

"During the day a Staff Officer of the Headquarter Staff was present on the summit, and reported direct to the Commander-in-Chief.

"At sunset I considered that the position could be held next day, provided that guns could be mounted and effective shelter provided. Both of these conditions were about to be fulfilled, as already mentioned.

"In the absence of General Coke, whom I ordered to come to report in person as to the situation, the evacuation took place under orders, given upon his own responsibility, by Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft. This occurred in the face of the vigorous protests of General Coke's Brigade-Major, the Officer commanding the Middlesex Regiment, and others.

"It is a matter for the Commander-in-Chief to decide whether there should be an investigation into the question of the unauthorised evacuation of Spion Kop."

General Buller, in forwarding to the Secretary of State for War Sir Charles Warren's report, made the following observations:—

"Sir C. Warren is hardly correct in saying that he was only allowed three and a half days' provisions. I had told him that transport for three and a half days would be sufficient burden to him, but that I would keep him filled up as he wanted it. That he was aware of this is shown by the following telegram

The Story of Spion Kop

which he sent on the day in question. It is the only report I had from Sir C. Warren :—

(Sent 7.54 P.M. Received 8.15 P.M.)

'Left Flank, 19th January.

'To the Chief of the Staff—

'I find there are only two roads by which we could possibly get from Trichardt's Drift to Potgeiter's, on the north of the Tugela, one by Acton Homes, the other by Fair View and Rosalie; the first I reject as too long, the second is a very difficult road for a large number of waggons, unless the enemy is thoroughly cleared out. I am, therefore, going to adopt some special arrangements which will involve my stay at Venter's Laager for two or three days. I will send in for further supplies and report progress. WARREN.'

"The reply to this was that three days' supply was being sent.

"I went over to Sir C. Warren on the 23rd. I pointed out to him that I had no further report and no intimation of the special arrangements foreshadowed by this telegram of the 19th, that for four days he had kept his men continuously exposed to shell and rifle fire, perched on the edge of an almost precipitous hill, that the position admitted of no second line, and the supports were massed close behind the firing line in indefensible formations, and that a panic or sudden charge might send the whole lot in disorder down the hill at any moment. I said it was too dangerous a situation to be prolonged, and that he must either attack or I should withdraw his force. I advocated, as I had previously done, an advance from his left. He said that he had the night before ordered General Coke to assault Spion Kop, but the latter had objected to undertaking a night attack on a position the road to which he had not reconnoitred, and added that he intended to assault Spion Kop that night.

"I suggested that as General Coke was still lame from the effects of a lately broken leg, General Woodgate, who had two sound legs, was better adapted for mountain climbing.

"As no heliograph could, on account of the fire, be kept on the east side of Spion Kop, messages for Sir C. Warren were received by our signallers at Spearman and telegraphed to Sir C. Warren; thus I saw them before he did, as I was at the signal station. The telegram Sir C. Warren quotes did not give me confidence in its sender, and at the moment I could see that our men on the top had given way and that efforts were being made to rally them. I telegraphed to Sir C. Warren: 'Unless you put some really good hard fighting man in command on the top you will lose the hill. I suggest Thorneycroft.'

"The statement that a staff officer reported direct to me during the day is a mistake. Colonel àCourt was sent down by General Woodgate almost as soon as he gained the summit.

"I have not thought it necessary to order any investigation. If at sundown the defence of the summit had been taken regularly in hand, intrenchments laid out, gun emplacements prepared, the dead removed, the wounded collected, and, in fact, the whole place brought under regular military command, and careful arrangements made for the supply of water and food to the scattered fighting line, the hills would have been held, I am sure.

"But no arrangements were made. General Coke appears to have been ordered away just as he would have been useful, and no one succeeded him; those on the top were ignorant of the fact that guns were coming up, and generally there was a want of organisation and system that acted most unfavourably on the defence.

"It is admitted by all that Colonel Thorneycroft acted with the greatest

The Transvaal War

gallantry throughout the day, and really saved the situation. Preparations for the second day's defence should have been organised during the day and have been commenced at nightfall.

"As this was not done I think Colonel Thorneycroft exercised a wise discretion.

"Our losses, I regret to say, were very heavy, but the enemy admitted to our doctors that theirs were equally severe, and though we were not successful in retaining the position, the losses inflicted on the enemy and the attack generally have had a marked effect upon them.

"I cannot close these remarks without bearing testimony to the gallant and admirable behaviour of the troops, the endurance shown by the Lancashire Fusiliers, the Middlesex Regiment, and Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry was admirable, while the efforts of the 2nd Battalion Scottish Rifles and 3rd Battalion King's Royal Rifles were equally good, and the Royal Lancasters fought gallantly."

The Commander-in-Chief, writing to the Secretary of State for War, thus criticised both operations and operators:—

"The plan of operations is not very clearly described in the despatches themselves, but it may be gathered from them and the accompanying documents themselves that the original intention was to cross the Tugela at or near Trichardt's Drift, and thence by following the road past Fair View and Acton Homes, to gain the open plain north of Spion Kop, the Boer position in front of Potgieter's Drift being too strong to be taken by direct attack. The whole force, less one brigade, was placed under the orders of Sir Charles Warren, who, the day after he had crossed the Tugela, seems to have consulted his General and principal Staff Officers, and to have come to the conclusion that the flanking movement which Sir Redvers Buller had mentioned in his secret instructions was impracticable on account of the insufficiency of supplies. He accordingly decided to advance by the more direct road leading north-east and branching off from a point east of Three Tree Hill. The selection of this road necessitated the capture and retention of Spion Kop, but whether it would have been equally necessary to occupy Spion Kop, had the line of advance indicated by Sir Redvers Buller been followed, is not stated in the correspondence. As Sir Charles Warren considered it impossible to make the wide flanking movement which was recommended, if not actually prescribed, in his secret instructions, he should at once have acquainted Sir Redvers Buller with the course of action which he proposed to adopt. There is nothing to show whether he did so or not, but it seems only fair to Sir Charles Warren to point out that Sir Redvers Buller appears throughout to have been aware of what was happening. On several occasions he was present during the operations. He repeatedly gave advice to his subordinate Commander, and on the day after the withdrawal from Spion Kop he resumed the chief command."

The abandonment of Spion Kop was condemned by Lord Roberts in the following terms:—

"As regards the withdrawal of the troops from the Spion Kop position, which, though occupied almost without opposition in the early morning of the 24th January, had to be held throughout the day under an extremely heavy fire, and the retention of which had become essential to the relief of Ladysmith,

The Story of Spion Kop

I regret that I am unable to concur with Sir Redvers Buller in thinking that Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft exercised a wise discretion in ordering the troops to retire. Even admitting that due preparations may not have been made for strengthening the position during the night, reorganising the defence and bringing up artillery—in regard to which Sir Charles Warren's report does not altogether bear out Sir Redvers Buller's contention—admitting also that the senior officers on the summit of the hill might have been more promptly informed of the measures taken by Sir Charles Warren to support and reinforce them, I am of opinion that Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft's assumption of responsibility and authority was wholly inexcusable. During the night the enemy's fire, if it did not cease altogether, could not have been formidable, and though lamp signalling was not possible at the time owing to the supply of oil having failed, it would not have taken more than two or three hours at most for Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft to communicate by messenger with Major-General Coke or Sir Charles Warren, and to receive a reply. Major-General Coke appears to have left Spion Kop at 9.30 P.M. for the purpose of consulting with Sir Charles Warren, and up to that hour the idea of a withdrawal had not been entertained. Yet almost immediately after Major-General Coke's departure Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft issued an order, without reference to superior authority, which upset the whole plan of operations and rendered unavailing the sacrifices which had already been made to carry it into effect."

In spite of this somewhat severe criticism, however, Lord Roberts went on to say :—

"On the other hand, it is only right to state that Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft appears to have behaved in a very gallant manner throughout the day, and it was doubtless due, in a great measure, to his exertions and example that the troops continued to hold the summit of the hill until directed to retire."

The action of Captain Phillips he warmly praised :—

"The conduct of Captain Phillips, Brigade-Major of the 10th Brigade, on the occasion in question, is deserving of high commendation. He did his best to rectify the mistake which was being made, but it was too late. Signalling communication was not re-established until 2.30 A.M. on the 25th January, and by that time the Naval guns could not have reached the summit of the hill before daybreak. Major-General Coke did not return, and Lieutenant-Colonel Thorneycroft had gone away. Moreover, most of the troops had begun to leave the hill, and the working parties, with the half-company of Royal Engineers, had also withdrawn."

Briefly the Commander-in-Chief deplored the chaotic state of affairs prior to the retirement. He said :—

"It is to be regretted that Sir Charles Warren did not himself visit Spion Kop during the afternoon or evening, knowing as he did that the state of affairs there was very critical, and that the loss of the position would involve the failure of the operations. He was, consequently, obliged to summon Major-General Coke to his headquarters in the evening, in order that he might ascertain how matters were going on, and the command on Spion Kop thus devolved on Lieutenant-Colonel Thorneycroft; but Major-General Coke was

The Transvaal War

not aware of this. About midday, under instructions from Sir Redvers Buller, Sir Charles Warren had directed Lieutenant-Colonel Thorneycroft to assume command on the summit of the hill, with the temporary rank of Brigadier-General, but this order was not communicated to Major-General Coke, who, until he left the position at 9.30 P.M., was under the impression that the command had devolved on Colonel Hill, as senior officer, after Colonel Crofton had been wounded. Omissions or mistakes of this nature may be trivial in themselves, yet may exercise an important influence on the course of events; and I think that Sir Redvers Buller is justified in remarking that 'there was a want of organisation and system which acted most unfavourably on the defence.'

In conclusion, the principal actors in the drama were censured, while the troops engaged received well-merited praise:—

"The attempt to relieve Ladysmith, described in these despatches, was well devised, and I agree with Sir Redvers Buller in thinking that it ought to have succeeded. That it failed may, in some measure, be due to the difficulties of the ground and the commanding positions held by the enemy—probably also to errors of judgment and want of administrative capacity on the part of Sir Charles Warren. But whatever faults Sir Charles Warren may have committed, the failure must also be ascribed to the disinclination of the officer in supreme command to assert his authority and see that what he thought best was done, and also to the unwarrantable and needless assumption of responsibility by a subordinate officer.

"The gratifying feature in these despatches is the admirable behaviour of the troops throughout the operations."

LIST OF STAFF

The following Divisions reached South Africa at the end of 1899 and the beginning of 1900.

FIFTH DIVISION

Lieutenant-General—Lieut.-General Sir C. Warren, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., R.E.
Aides-de-Camp—Major R. M. B. F. Kelly, R.A.; Lieut. I. V. Paton, Royal Scots Fusiliers.
Assistant Adjutant-General—Colonel A. W. Morris, *p.s.c.*
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Generals—Bt.-Major T. Capper, East Lancashire Regt., *p.s.c.*;
Bt.-Major H. N. Sargent, Army Service Corps.
Assistant Provost-Marshal—Bt.-Major E. C. J. Williams, East Kent Regt.
Principal Medical Officer—Lieut.-Colonel W. B. Allin, M.B., R.A.M.C.
Divisional Signalling Officer—Captain A. A. McHardy, R.A.

10TH BRIGADE

Major-General—Colonel (local Maj.-General) J. T. Coke.
Aide-de-Camp—Lieut. W. E. Kemble, R.A.
Brigade-Major—Captain H. G. C. Phillips, Welsh Regt., *p.s.c.*

11TH BRIGADE

Major-General—Colonel (local Maj.-General) E. R. P. Woodgate, K.C.M.G., C.B., *p.s.c.*
Aide-de-Camp—Captain F. M. Carleton, D.S.O., Royal Lancashire Regt.
Brigade-Major—Captain N. H. Vertue, East Kent Regt.

SIXTH DIVISION

Lieutenant-General—Major-General (local Lieut.-General) T. Kelly-Kenny, C.B., *p.s.c.*
Aides-de-Camp—Major H. I. W. Hamilton, D.S.O., Royal West Surrey Regt., *p.s.c.*;
Captain W. H. Booth, East Kent Regt.
Assistant Adjutant-General—Colonel A. E. W. Goldsmid, *p.s.c.*
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Generals—Major C. C. Monro, Royal West Surrey Regt., *p.s.c.*;
Major J. E. Caunter, Lancashire Fusiliers, *p.s.c.*
Assistant Provost-Marshal—Major M. G. Wilkinson, King's Own Scottish Borderers.
Principal Medical Officer—Lieut.-Colonel W. L. Gubbins, M.B., R.A.M.C.
Divisional Signalling Officer—Lieut. J. T. Burnett-Stuart, Rifle Brigade.

12TH BRIGADE

Major-General—Colonel (local Maj.-General) R. A. P. Clements, D.S.O., A.D.C.
Aide-de-Camp—Captain H. de C. Moody, South Wales Borderers.
Brigade-Major—Captain R. S. Oxley, King's Royal Rifle Corps, *p.s.c.*

13TH BRIGADE

Major-General—Colonel (local Maj.-General) C. E. Knox.
Aide-de-Camp—Captain O. H. E. Marescaux, Shropshire Light Infantry.
Brigade-Major—Captain R. W. Thompson, North Lancashire Regt., *p.s.c.*

The Transvaal War

SEVENTH DIVISION

Lieutenant-General—Major-General (local Lieut.-General) C. Tucker, C.B.

Aides-de-Camp—

Assistant Adjutant-General—Colonel H. E. Belfield, *p.s.c.*

Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Generals—Brevet-Major H. G. Fitton, D.S.O., Royal

Berkshire Regt., *p.s.c.* ; Lieut.-Colonel H. G. Rice, Army Service Corps.

Assistant Provost-Marshal—Brevet-Major F. Wintour, Royal West Kent Regt., *p.s.c.*

Principal Medical Officer—Lieut.-Colonel J. A. Gormley, M.D., R.A.M.C.

Divisional Signalling Officer—Captain J. R. K. Birch, Cheshire Regt.

14TH BRIGADE

Major-General—Major-General Sir H. C. Chermside, G.C.M.G., C.B., R.E.

Aide-de-Camp—Captain E. FitzG. M. Wood, Devonshire Regt.

Brigade-Major—Captain W. M. Marter, 1st Dragoon Guards, *p.s.c.*

15TH BRIGADE

Major-General—Colonel (local Maj.-General) A. G. Wavell, *p.s.c.*

Brigade-Major—Captain L. R. Carleton, Essex Regt., *p.s.c.*

END OF VOL. III.

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE
TRANSVAAL WAR



THE QUEEN LISTENING TO A DISPATCH FROM THE FRONT.

From the Picture by S. Begg.

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE TRANSVAAL WAR

BY

LOUIS CRESWICKE

AUTHOR OF "ROXANE," ETC.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

IN SIX VOLUMES

VOL. IV.—FROM LORD ROBERTS' ENTRY INTO THE FREE
STATE TO THE BATTLE OF KARREE

EDINBURGH: T. C. & E. C. JACK

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
At the Ballantyne Press

CONTENTS—VOL. IV.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE	PAGE vii
-------------------------------	-------------

CHAPTER I

THE VOTE OF CENSURE	PAGE 1	THE HERDING OF CRONJE, FEB-	PAGE
KIMBERLEY	14	RUARY 16 TO 18	49
GENERAL FRENCH'S RIDE, FEBRU-		THE BATTLE OF PAARDEBERG, FEB-	
ARY 12 TO 15	30	RUARY 18	54
STRATEGY <i>versus</i> TACTICS	37	TRAPPED	62
		THE SURRENDER OF CRONJE	71

CHAPTER II

MAFEKING, DECEMBER AND JANUARY	PAGE 80
--	------------

CHAPTER III

AT POPLAR GROVE	PAGE 95	AT BLOEMFONTEIN, MARCH 13	PAGE 108
THE FIGHT AT DRIEFONTEIN, MARCH 10	101		

CHAPTER IV

MAFEKING, FEBRUARY	PAGE 112
------------------------------	-------------

CHAPTER V

AT CHIEVELEY AGAIN	PAGE 121	EXPECTATION	PAGE 151
LADYSMITH, FEBRUARY 1 TO 26	129	THE RELIEF OF LADYSMITH, FEB-	
THE BATTLE OF PIETERS, FEB-		RUARY 28	153
RUARY 20 TO 27	134	THE FORMAL ENTRY, MARCH 3	156

CHAPTER VI

CHANGES IN CAPE COLONY, FEB-	PAGE	AT BETHULIE, MARCH 12	PAGE
RUARY AND MARCH	163		171

CHAPTER VII

BLOEMFONTEIN UNDER BRITISH	PAGE	THE BATTLE OF KARREE	PAGE
RULE	174		192

CHAPTER VIII

MAFEKING IN MARCH	PAGE 194	COLONEL PLUMER'S OPERATIONS	PAGE 204
LIST OF STAFF			PAGE 213
APPENDIX			215

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS—VOL. IV.

MAP ILLUSTRATING THE MOVEMENTS FOR THE RELIEF OF KIMBERLEY AND THE
CAPTURE OF BLOEMFONTEIN *At Front*

1. COLOURED PLATES

	PAGE		PAGE
THE QUEEN LISTENING TO A DISPATCH FROM THE FRONT <i>Frontispiece</i>		THE INNISKILLING DRAGOONS	104
THE IMPERIAL YEOMANRY	12	SOUTH AFRICAN LIGHT HORSE, BRABANT'S HORSE, AND DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S VOLUNTEER RIFLES	120
THE ROYAL LANCASTERS	16	STRATHCONA'S HORSE	184
WEST YORKSHIRE AND YORKSHIRE REGIMENTS	88	THE CAPE TOWN HIGHLANDERS	200

2. FULL-PAGE PLATES

	PAGE		PAGE
THE DASH FOR KIMBERLEY—THE 10TH HUSSARS CROSSING KLIP DRIFT	32	THE RELIEF OF LADYSMITH—THE LAST RUSH AT HLANGWANE HILL	128
THE LAST STAND MADE BY THE BOERS BEFORE KIMBERLEY	36	IN BELEAGUERED LADYSMITH—WATCHING FOR BULLER FROM OBSERVATION HILL	152
CAPTURE OF A BOER CONVOY BY GENERAL FRENCH'S TROOPS	40	HINDOO REFUGEES FROM THE TRANSVAAL IN CAMP AT CAPE TOWN	168
THE BATTLE OF PAARDEBERG	56	CONVEYING WOUNDED TO WYNBERG HOSPITAL CAMP	172
CRONJE'S STRONGHOLD	64	THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF BLOEMFONTEIN—AN EVENING CONCERT IN MARKET SQUARE BY THE PIPERS OF THE HIGHLAND BRIGADE	176
CRONJE SURRENDERS TO LORD ROBERTS	72	COLONEL PLUMER'S GALLANT ATTEMPT TO RELIEVE MAFEKING FROM THE NORTH	208
CRONJE'S FORCE ON THEIR MARCH SOUTH	80		
SHELL FROM THE NAVAL BRIGADE DISPERSING BOERS	96		
THE FORMAL SURRENDER OF BLOEMFONTEIN	108		
SLEEPLESS MAFEKING	112		

3. FULL-PAGE PORTRAITS

	PAGE		PAGE
THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G.	8	BRIGADIER-GENERAL THE EARL OF DUNDONALD, C.B.	156
LIEUT.-GENERAL THOMAS KELLY-KENNY, C.B.	24	LIEUT.-GENERAL HON. N.G. LYTTELTON, C.B.	160
GENERAL CRONJE	48	MR. M. T. STEYN, LATE PRESIDENT ORANGE FREE STATE	192
MAJOR-GENERAL A. FITZROY HART, C.B.	136		
MAJOR-GENERAL H. J. T. HILDYARD, C.B.	144		

4. MAPS AND ENGRAVINGS IN THE TEXT

	PAGE		PAGE
SHELL PICKED UP IN KIMBERLEY STREETS	15	DIRECTING AN ARMY FROM A MILITARY BALLOON	102
"LONG CECIL" MADE AT DE BEERS MINES	21	FACSIMILE OF "THE MAFEKING MAIL"	114
PLACARD ERECTED BY MR. RHODES	27	SCENE OF FIGHTING AT MONTE CHRISTO	125
TYPICAL UNDERGROUND DWELLING AT KIMBERLEY	36	BALLOON MAP—BATTLE OF PIETERS AND RELIEF OF LADYSMITH	135
10TH HUSSARS WITH NORDENFELDT GUN PLAN OF PAARDEBERG	46	SIGNAL APPARATUS OF H.M.S. "FORTE"	146
GUNS CAPTURED AT PAARDEBERG	57	KING'S POST, LADYSMITH	151
BOER TRENCHES AT PAARDEBERG	68	MAP OF OPERATIONS ON ORANGE RIVER	165
MARKET SQUARE, MAFEKING	78	SIGNAL STATION AT BLOEMFONTEIN	182
GUN MADE IN MAFEKING	85	NATIVE CHURCH, MAFEKING	199
	87	MAP SHOWING ADVANCE TO MAFEKING	205
		LOBATSI RAILWAY STATION	212

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE—VOL. IV.

FEBRUARY 1900.

- 12-13.—General French, following up Hannay's movement, crossed Riet River, and next day with a strong force marched twenty-five miles into the Free State, seized Klip Drift on the Modder River, occupied the hills to the north, and captured three of the enemy's laagers, with supplies.
- 13-14.—6th (Kelly-Kenny's) Division on north bank of the Reit River at Waterfall Drift.
- 14.—Lord Roberts advanced to Dekiel's Drift.
- 15.—General French reached and relieved Kimberley, captured Boer laager and supplies, and forced the enemy to withdraw.
The Boers evacuated Majesfontein and Spyfontein, retreating to Koodoesrand Drift.
- 16.—General Kelly-Kenny, in pursuit of Cronje retiring east with 10,000 men on Bloemfontein, captured 78 waggons with stores, 2 waggons with Mauser rifles, and 8 waggons with shell belonging to Cronje's column.
Capture of Cingolo Hill by Sir Redvers Buller's force.
Lord Roberts occupied Jacobsdal.
Flight of Cronje's force and occupation of Majesfontein by the Guards.
- 17.—Cronje's force overtaken and surrounded at Paardeberg. General Brabant engaged the enemy near Dordrecht.
Successful reconnaissance by Colonel Henderson from Arundel.
- 18.—Severe fighting at Paardeberg, where Cronje was being gradually surrounded.
Capture of Monte Cristo. General Lyttelton's Division, by a brilliant converging movement, drove the Boers across the river.
- 19.—Capture of Hlangwane by the Fusilier Brigade. The Boers evacuated the hill, and left a large camp behind them.
Bombardment of Cronje's position began. Boer reinforcements driven back.
Cronje asked for armistice, but Lord Kitchener demanded his surrender; Cronje refused, and was then bombarded heavily.
Reoccupation of Dordrecht. General Brabant entered the town in the morning, the Boers taking to flight.
- 20.—General Hart occupied Colenso.
Lord Roberts defeated Boer reinforcements at Paardeberg.
- 21.—5th Division crossed the Tugela at Colenso.
- 23.—Advance on Ladysmith continued. The Boers' position at Grobler's Kloof attacked.
The cordon round Cronje began to close in.
Captain Hon. R. H. L. J. de Montmorency, V.C. (21st Hussars), killed while doing magnificent work with his Scouts near Stormberg.
- 26.—Finding the passage of the river near Colenso commanded by strong entrenchments, Sir Redvers Buller sent his guns and baggage back to the south side of the Tugela, and found a new crossing.
- 26-27.—Colesberg and Rensberg, having been evacuated by the Boers, were occupied by General Clements, while Jamestown was occupied by General Brabant.
- 27 (on anniversary of Majuba, 1881).—Cronje, with 44 commandants and other officers of all grades, and over 3500 men, surrendered unconditionally to Lord Roberts.

The Transvaal War

Sir Redvers Buller's force captured the Boer position at Pieters. This action opened the road to Ladysmith. Boers retired north to Ladysmith.

28.—Relief of Ladysmith after 120 day's investment.

MARCH 1900.

- 1.—Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener visited Kimberley and attended a meeting in the Town Hall.
- 2.—Cronje and his staff, having been moved to Simonstown under a guard of City Imperial Volunteers, were put on board H.M.S. *Doris*, and sent to St. Helena.
- 3.—General Buller formally entered Ladysmith.
Skirmish near Osonfontein. General French came in contact with a Boer force, who tried to get away, but were held to their position by the British force.
- 4-5.—General Brabant advanced from Dordrecht against Labuschagne, and was completely successful.
- 5.—General Gatacre occupied Stormberg without opposition.
- 7.—Lord Roberts dispersed Boers near Poplar Grove.
General Gatacre reached Burghersdorp.
- 8.—General Clements occupied Norval's Pont.
- 10.—The Boers dispersed near Driefontein, fifteen miles east of Poplar Grove.
- 11.—Presidents Kruger and Steyn received reply from the Prime Minister refusing to entertain their absurd overtures for peace.
- 12.—General French (with cavalry, R.H.A., and Mounted Infantry) arrived before Bloemfontein, and

captured two hills which command the railway and town.

General French captured the railway near Bloemfontein.

General Gatacre approached Bethulie.

- 13.—Lord Roberts occupied Bloemfontein. His despatch ran:—"The British flag now flies over the Presidency vacated last evening by Mr. Steyn, late President of the Orange Free State. The inhabitants gave the troops a cordial welcome."
- 14.—General Pretymann, C.B., appointed Military Governor of Bloemfontein.
- 15.—General Gatacre occupied Bethulie.
Boers attacked Colonel Plumer's camp and were repulsed.
- 16.—Fighting at Fourteen Streams.
- 19.—Lord Kitchener occupied Prieska, and received the submission of rebels.
- 20.—Rouxville occupied by Major Cumming.
- 21.—Smithfield occupied by British troops.
- 23.—Party of English officers shot near Bloemfontein.
- 27.—General Clements occupied Fauresmith, and arrested the landdrost.
Death of General Joubert.
- 29.—Action at Karree Siding. Boer position taken.
Wepener occupied by Brabant's Horse under Colonel Dalgety.
- 30.—Colonel Broadwood with Cavalry Brigade and two batteries Royal Horse Artillery at Thabanchu retired on waterworks pressed by the enemy.
- 31.—Loss of convoy and six guns at Koon Spruit.
Action at Ramathlabama for the relief of Mafeking, and Colonel Plumer's small force repulsed by the Boers.



Movements of French's Cavalry —————
 Movements of the Infantry
 The March on Bloemfontein ————

MAP ILLUSTRATING THE MOVEMENTS FOR THE RELIEF OF
 KIMBERLEY AND THE CAPTURE OF BLOEMFONTEIN

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE TRANSVAAL WAR

CHAPTER I

THE TURNING OF THE TIDE

February 27, 1900.

"Storm, strong with all the bitter heart of hate,
Smote England, now nineteen dark years ago,
As when the tide's full wrath in seaward flow
Smites and bears back the swimmer. Fraud and fate
Were leagued against her : fear was fain to prate
Of honour in dishonour, pride brought low,
And humbleness whence holiness must grow,
And greatness born of shame to be so great.

The winter day that withered hope and pride
Shines now triumphal on the turning tide
That sets once more our trust in freedom free,
That leaves a ruthless and a truthless foe
And all base hopes that hailed his cause laid low,
And England's name a light on land and sea."

—ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

THE VOTE OF CENSURE

THE terrible events of the month of December had produced a disquieting effect upon the public mind. Agitated questions were asked on all subjects connected with the series of catastrophes, and the replies were so unsatisfactory that one and all became sensible that the actions of those in power were not sufficiently in unison with public sentiment, and even the keenest supporters of the Government numbly experienced a loss of confidence in those at the helm. It was felt that some one must be to blame for the miserable condition of affairs, the hideous series of defeats that had made Great Britain an object of ridicule on the Continent. For the forwarding of our troops "in dribblets," for the ineffectiveness of our guns in comparison with Boer weapons, for the uselessness of the carbine in competition with the Mauser, for the scarcity of horses, for the preparedness of the Boers, for the unpreparedness of the British, for the under-estimation of the strength

The Transvaal War

of the enemy, and for many other things which tended to bring about the national disaster, various members of the Government were blamed. Charges of incapacity were levelled at the Secretary of State for War, the War Office, and the Committee of National Defence. Even the stoutest Tories were found declaiming against the attitude of lethargy—flippancy, some said—adopted by those in whose hands the fate of the nation rested. Mr. Balfour, in certain speeches somewhat ill-advisedly delivered at a critical moment, had contrived almost to wound people who were already deeply wounded by humiliation and anxiety. His mood had not been in sympathy with the public mood. He had endeavoured to brush away the stern problems facing him by minimising their seriousness, by affecting to believe that the Government was, like Cæsar's wife, beyond reproach. His attitude implied that the Cabinet could do no wrong, and that the misfortunes and errors (if errors there were) were due to a concatenation of circumstances for which neither the Government at home nor the generals abroad could be held responsible. In consequence of this attitude, on one side Mr. Balfour was blamed, on another, Mr. Chamberlain. The Colonial Secretary was accused of the policy of "bluffing with a weak hand," while the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as was inevitable, came in for his share of obloquy. It was the cheeseparing principle that was at the bottom of it all; cheeseparing and red-tape were responsible for debility and delay of all kinds, and political inertia had undoubtedly spelt defeat. The clamour was reasonable and just. It was felt that prudence and energy should have served as fuel to stoke the engine of public affairs, not as a brake to be put on in the face of disaster. On all hands the public of one consent cried for a new broom and "a great co-ordinating guiding mind," and the universal clamour awoke the Government to a consciousness that there are times and seasons in the history of nations when party recriminations and crystallised party etiquette must give way before the stress of a great national need—the need to preserve at all costs the honour and the reputation of the Empire in face of the whole world.

Accordingly, the opening debate of the Session was one which cannot be passed over. The Queen's Speech struck a note of decision that was at once comforting and in sympathy with her people. Thus it ran: "I have witnessed with pride and the heartiest gratification the patriotism, eagerness, and spontaneous loyalty with which my subjects in all parts of my dominions have come forward to share in the common defence of their Imperial interests. I am confident that I shall not look to them in vain when I exhort them to sustain and renew their exertions until they have brought this struggle for the maintenance of the Empire and the assertion of its supremacy in South Africa to a victorious conclusion."

The Vote of Censure

The Earl of Kimberley commented on the ignorance of the Government regarding the military preparations that for years had been going on in the Transvaal, and indulged in criticisms which might have been weighty had his hearers not been tickled by the strange irony of fate which converted into critic one of the authors of the humiliating drama which had been left to shape itself from the disastrous *scena* of 1881.

To these criticisms the Prime Minister—somewhat broken by domestic bereavement—offered but a weak and depressing reply. “How,” he asked, in regard to the Boer preparations, “could the Government know what was going on?”

“I believe, as a matter of fact, though this must not be taken as official, that the guns were generally introduced in the boilers of locomotives, and that the munitions of war were introduced in piano-cases and tubs. But we had no power of search, we had no power of knowing what munitions of war were sent out. We certainly had no power of supervising their importation into the Transvaal. It is a very remarkable peculiarity of the public opinion of this country that people always desire to eat their cake and have it. They rejoice very much with a spirit of complacency that we have a very small Secret Service Fund. Information is a matter of money and nothing else. If you want much information you must give much money; if you give little money you will get little information; and considering the enormous sums which are spent by other Powers, not least by the Transvaal Republic, in secret service—which I was told on high diplomatic authority has been £800,000 in one year—and comparing this with the ludicrously small sums which have for a great number of years been habitually spent by English Governments, it is impossible for us to have the omniscience which the noble Earl seems to regard as a necessary attribute of Her Majesty's Government.”

Further on he said:

“We must all join together to exercise all the power that we can give in order to extricate ourselves from a situation that is full of humiliation and not free from danger, though I do not say the danger may not be easily exaggerated. Many a country has commenced a great war with difficulties of this kind. We have only to look back at what the Northern States of America went through at the opening of the Civil War to see how easy it would be to draw a mistaken inference from the reverses which we have met at the opening of this war. We have every ground to think that if we set ourselves heartily to work and exert all the instruments of power we possess we shall bring this war to a satisfactory conclusion. I think we must defer the pleasing task of quarrelling among ourselves until that result has been obtained. We have a work that now appeals to us as subjects of the Queen, as Englishmen, and it must throw into shadow the ancient claims which party expediency has on the action of all our statesmen.”

This speech concluded, Lord Rosebery suddenly sprang up, and delivered himself with thrilling emphasis of sentiments which went at once to the heart of the nation. Deeply he deplored the Prime

The Transvaal War

Minister's speech, which made it hard for "the man in the street" to support the policy of the Government.

The country, he insisted, had a right to know if there was adequate information given to the Government before the crisis of the Transvaal affair, or even sufficient to guide them in their diplomacy or their negotiation. "That is a point which the nation will insist on knowing, whether in this House or the other. If you had not sufficient information, dismiss your Intelligence Department, dismiss Mr. Conyngham Greene and your consular agents wherever they had touch with this matter—at Lourenço Marques or elsewhere. If you did know of it, you have a heavy responsibility to bear. The noble Marquis asks, 'How could we see through a deal board?' I suppose he meant by that to allude to the pianoforte cases in which, with more knowledge than he gave himself credit for, he unofficially states that the ammunition was brought into Pretoria."

Passing on to the question of Secret Service money, he declared that the Government was in possession of a very commanding majority in the House, and that if they had the responsibility of Government they were bound to ask for what funds, whether Secret Service or other, which they might think necessary for the safety of the Empire.

"They cannot," he pursued, "devolve that responsibility on others by speaking of the working of the British Constitution. I ask noble Lords to analyse the speech of the noble Marquis, which is still ringing in their ears. It is the speech of a Minister explaining a disastrous position. He practically has only given two explanations of that situation. They are, first, that the Government had not enough Secret Service money to obtain information, and, secondly, the mysterious working of the British Constitution. I suppose that there are foreign representatives in the gallery listening to this debate, and I suppose that the speech of the Prime Minister will be flashed to-night all over Europe, and Europe, which is watching with a keen and not a benevolent interest the proceedings of our armies in South Africa, will learn that the causes of our disasters are one avoidable and the other inevitable. The avoidable one is the inadequate amount of the Secret Service Fund, and the inevitable one the secular working of the British Constitution."

Leaving the question of unpreparedness, he came to the great point, and asked what the Government intended to do.

"There is a paragraph in the Queen's Speech which I rejoice to see, of a somewhat didactic character in its first sentence, but not without interest in its second. 'The experience of a great war must necessarily afford lessons of the greatest importance to the military administration of the country. You will not, I am convinced, shrink from any outlay that may be required to place our defensive preparations on a level with the responsibilities which the possession of so great an Empire has laid on us.' The noble Marquis made no reference to that paragraph, except to say that he does not think we shall see compulsory service in the life of the youngest peer present. I do not affirm or question

The Vote of Censure

that proposition, but I can say I do not think it is so immeasurably remote as the noble Marquis considers that some form of compulsory service may have to be introduced to meet the growing exigencies of the Empire. I am sure that neither from this nor from any other sacrifice will the nation recoil to preserve the predominance of our Empire. We have sent away from our island a vast mass of troops which usually garrison it. Situated as we are in the centre of a universe by no means friendly to us, that we should not have a hint from the First Minister of the Crown what military measures the Government propose to take in face of the disasters we have met with, and what sacrifices we must inevitably be called on to make to redress them, is one of the most extraordinary features of the working of the British Constitution on which the noble Marquis has laid such great stress. I agree with him in saying that the country will carry this thing through. It will carry it through in spite of all the impediments, both of men and of methods, that have shackled it in the past; but I venture to say that it will have to be inspired by a loftier tone and by a truer patriotism than we have heard from the Prime Minister to-night."

Mr. Balfour, in the House of Commons, was as damping to popular hopes as the Prime Minister in the House of Lords. Regarding the all-important subject of the under-estimation of the Boer strength, he somewhat airily said:

"It will be asked, How comes it, then, that this great under-estimate of the Boer strength was made if we knew approximately what the Boer armaments were, and what Boers were likely to take the field? I do not know that I have got any very satisfactory answer to give to that question. It is a purely and strictly military problem, and, as history shows, it is a kind of problem very difficult to answer satisfactorily. You can gauge the military strength of a European nation with a fixed army, with all their modern military apparatus, and with all their military statistics at your disposal; but when you come to problems of States whose military organisation is not of that elaborate kind, great mistakes have been made in the past, and I doubt not great mistakes will be made in the future. They certainly have been made by almost every military nation of whom we have any record. But if this is regarded as an attack upon the military experts of the War Office, it is surely an unfair attack, because soldiers, who are not especially given to agreeing with one another, were absolutely unanimous upon this point. I do not believe you will be able to quote the opinion of a single soldier of any position whatever, or of no position, delivered before, say, July 31 or August 31 last, indicating any opinion which will show that the force which we in the first instance sent out would not be amply sufficient, or more than amply sufficient, for all purposes. (Cries of "What about Butler?") The right hon. gentlemen put a question to me about Sir W. Butler. We had not the slightest trace at the War Office in any communication, public, semi-public, or private—no communication of any sort, kind, or description, which indicated that in Sir W. Butler's opinion the force we sent out was not sufficient—I was going to say doubly sufficient—for any work that it might be called upon to perform."

Indeed, the whole tenor of the speech was generally regarded as unsatisfactory and dispiriting. It was felt that, as Lord Rosebery expressed it, the Government must be left to "muddle through"

The Transvaal War

somehow. People who hung anxiously on the lips of the Government for definite statements regarding future resolute action were disappointed, and waited wearily the conclusion of the debate.

On February 1, Sir Charles Dilke drew vigorous comparisons between the present and former campaigns. In regard to our lack of artillery he said :

"All our generals had told us that direct artillery fire had failed against the Boer entrenchments. It had been known for years past that direct artillery fire would be likely to fail against strong entrenchments; yet we sent twenty-one batteries of field-artillery to South Africa before the first one of the three howitzer batteries was despatched. It was one of the strongest charges which he and others had brought against the War Office for some years, that our army was more badly supplied with field-artillery than any other army in the world. It was not even comparable with the field-artillery of Switzerland and Roumania. In regard to our guns, the Leader of the House had stated in a speech at Manchester that we had guns in South Africa sufficient for three army corps of regular troops. He should like to know on whose authority the right hon. gentleman made that statement. The first force sent to South Africa from India was supplied with guns, not on that scale, but still in fairly decent and respectable measure. The forces of Lord Methuen and Sir Redvers Buller fell altogether short of even the scale adopted for the Indian Contingent. Both these generals had themselves called attention to their deficiency in this respect. We had not even now got artillery on anything like the scale laid down by the right hon. gentleman, and we could not have it in South Africa, because we had not got it in the world. In these circumstances he could only characterise the statement of the Leader of the House as entirely erroneous and misleading, and altogether a blunder. With regard to the batteries which were even now being sent out, many of them were manned by reservists and by garrison artillerymen, who had had no experience in the handling of modern field-guns."

Proceeding to the question of lack of cavalry, he argued :

"With regard to cavalry as with regard to artillery, the first force was well supplied, but the forces of Lord Methuen and General Buller were very deficient in that respect. In that connection the First Lord had made an attack on the critics of the War Office. He said they had not seen, or if they had seen had not insisted on, a novel fact in the present war, namely, that for the first time in the history of the world they had seen an army composed entirely of mounted infantry. The right hon. gentleman had only to read Sir William Butler's 'Life of General Colley,' where he would find very marked attention drawn to that matter. As to the Defence Committee of the Cabinet, of which the right hon. gentleman was a member, though he himself had been spoken of as the author of that body, he must admit that it had failed. It was instituted after a correspondence in which he himself, his hon. friend (Mr. Arnold Foster), and Mr. Spenser Wilkinson took part, and it was not new to the present Government. It was instituted in the time of Lord Rosebery's Government as a Committee of the Cabinet, but it had been proclaimed to the world in the time of the present Government. It had failed on account of the slackness of those who attended the deliberations of the Committee. It had not been worked as the authors of the proposal

The Vote of Censure

thought it might have been worked in the interests of the Empire. The Committee ought to have foreseen these difficulties with respect to mounted men; they were foreseen by military men. Though political differences occurred between Sir A. Milner and Sir W. Butler, Sir A. Milner consulted General Butler on the military aspect of the situation, and General Butler's opinions were known to the Government, or should have been. They were known to Sir A. Milner at any rate and were not concealed by him when he was in this country a year ago. According to his (Sir C. Dilke's) information, which reached him immediately after the statement had been made to Sir A. Milner, General Sir W. Butler declared that 60,000 men would be required in Cape Colony and 25,000 men in Natal. Leaving that, however, what was the attitude of the Cabinet with regard to the need for cavalry? They telegraphed to the Colonies to refuse mounted men. They gave their reasons in the telegram of October 3: 'In view of the numbers already available, infantry most and cavalry least serviceable.' On December 16 they telegraphed to the Colonies, 'Mounted men preferred.' After all the loss of life that had taken place, and the months of checks and reverses, they had discovered what competent soldiers had discovered before the war, and must have told them, that mounted men were essential for a campaign of this kind."

In reply, the Under-Secretary of State for War made the first telling and apposite statement which had been furnished for the Government during the course of the proceedings. His exposition was straightforwardness itself. Though merely the mouthpiece of the Government, Mr. Wyndham gave utterance to definite statements which created a very favourable impression throughout the country, and served at once to wipe away the taste of foregone pronouncements. He said:

"Every one to his dying day would look back with regret on the great many disasters which had followed, but no one could ever know what would have happened if the other course had been adopted. It was very easy to conceive that if Sir G. White had not stayed at Ladysmith and Sir R. Buller had not gone to his relief disaster might have been developed in another line, and that there might have been that universal rising of the Cape Dutch which, thank Heaven, had not occurred. When it was stated that Lord Methuen had not sufficient cavalry and artillery with him, it must be remembered that Lord Methuen was hurried off to the Orange River, and, as a matter of fact, he arrived on the frontier in fewer days than the German army reached the French frontier, and he had not with him the cavalry, which had been diverted for the relief of Ladysmith and other purposes. On the morrow after Nicholson's Nek three more battalions were sent from home, though none had been asked for, and Lord Landsowne offered a sixth division. In reply, he was told that preparation was desirable, but that there was no immediate need for its despatch. The situation was again changed by the reverses at Stormberg and Magersfontein and the check at Colenso. Thereupon the sixth division was ordered to embark without any communication from South Africa, and at the same time the seventh division was ordered to be mobilised. On December 15, the day after his check at Colenso, Sir R. Buller asked for the seventh division, the mobilisation of which had already been ordered, and for

The Transvaal War

8000 mounted irregulars from this country. Lord Landsowne replied that the seventh division would embark on January 4, which it did. Next day the first step was taken in connection with the raising of the Imperial Yeomanry, and volunteers were invited to come forward in order to fill the places left vacant by the raising from each battalion of one company of mounted infantry. The patriotism of the Militia was also appealed to, and fourteen battalions were now serving in South Africa, while others were on the way. A great military authority once said, 'When a battalion is asked for, send a brigade.' That had been the course pursued by Lord Landsowne."

In regard to the number of our guns, Mr. Wyndham continued his argument in the following terms:—

"As the right hon. baronet had pressed for information with regard to the number of guns which had been despatched to South Africa, it would not be out of place to tell the House that we had sent and were sending 36 siege train heavy guns; there were already there 38 mobile naval guns, and in addition to these there were 36 5-inch howitzers carrying a heavy shell charged with 50 lbs. of lyddite, in all 110 guns, some of them with a range of 10,000 yards, and all capable of throwing heavy shells. Besides these there were 54 horse-artillery guns and 234 field-artillery guns, in all, counting the howitzers, 324 guns capable of accompanying troops in the field. Including the two mountain batteries, there were altogether 410 guns in South Africa, without reckoning the guns that were going out with the Volunteers and the Colonials, which would bring the number up to 452."

Then taking the subject of mounted troops, he went on:—

"On the question of mounted troops, it had been said that the Government announced to the world their conviction that unmounted troops were the kind of troops most suitable to South African warfare. The word 'mounted' was never used. However, he would not insist on that, but he did think that those who had quoted this opinion so often should consider when they were used, because then they would see that they gave no indication that the Government held the opinion attributed to them. As a matter of fact, since the outbreak of the war the Government had sent out a larger proportion of mounted troops than was usually contemplated, because they believed that mounted troops were especially suited to go to Africa. The time at which the phrase was used that infantry was most wanted and cavalry least wanted was on October 3, before the ultimatum was sent, before the war began, and at a time when Sir R. Buller was satisfied that an army corps, a cavalry division, and the necessary troops for the line of communication, giving 50,000 men in addition to the 25,000 already in South Africa, was an adequate force. When the question of the Colonial Contingents was first raised, Queensland offered 250 and New Zealand 200 mounted infantry, and the 108 New South Wales Lancers then in this country volunteered, making in all 558 mounted men. No specific offer was received from the other Colonies, but they expressed a wish that they might be allowed to take some part in the campaign. He thereon consulted Sir R. Buller as to the number that should be asked for in order that each Colony might be represented more or less in proportion to their respective populations. Sir Redvers stated that it would be easier to give the Colonial troops an immediate place at the front if they were invited to contribute manageable units of 125 men each. If the original offers of the Colonies



THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G.
PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN SECRETARY.

Photo by Russell & Sons, London.

The Vote of Censure

had been accepted, there would have been 1375 more mounted men at the front at an earlier date, when no one contemplated that the force sent out would be insufficient for its task. The Colonial Legislatures have not changed their note in consequence of the disappointments and reverses which have been experienced, but have made further offers—an example which might well have been followed nearer home. Altogether there had been accepted from the Colonies 2075 unmounted and 4678 mounted men. The proportion of mounted to unmounted troops in South Africa at four different periods were: In the original garrison, 7600 unmounted and 2000 mounted; on October 9, the day of the ultimatum, 12,600 unmounted and 3400 mounted; on January 1, 83,600 unmounted and 19,800 mounted; while the total number of troops in South Africa, not including the Fourth Cavalry Brigade, were 142,800 unmounted and 37,800 mounted, and in the next fortnight or three weeks there would be out there 180,600 of all arms.

Sir Edward Grey said:—

“He was giving the right hon. gentleman some instances of the value of the support from his side. The primary object of the policy which had ended in the war was not to drive the Boers from British territory, as they were not then on it. The primary object was not to plant the British flag at Pretoria and Johannesburg. These two things might be the result of the war, but they were not the primary objects of the Government policy. The objects which he wished to see attained, and which he would pledge himself to give the utmost support to the Government in attaining, were, first, equal rights between all white men in South Africa, and by that he meant that never again should a situation arise in any part of the British sphere in which a modern industrial community should be placed under the heel of an antiquated minority which was dominated by prejudice and governed by corruption. The second object was that never again in South Africa should it be possible for arsenals to be formed or an accumulation of military material under any control except British control. That was the end to be attained, and to that end the Government would have support.”

On the 3rd of February Mr. Bryce expressed his opinions. He affected to disbelieve that there had been any Dutch conspiracy to drive the British from South Africa, and considered that, owing to the menace of the Government in the arrangement of negotiations, the meek Boer had no resource but to prepare for war.

Mr. Goschen admitted the gravity of the situation and the responsibility of the Government *en masse*. The Cabinet, he decided, must stand or fall together. The Admiralty, in acceptance of its responsibility, had assisted the army with heavy guns without weakening its resources. Lastly, he touched enthusiastically on the exhibition of Colonial loyalty:—

“Before concluding I must say a word with reference to the Colonists. They have been supporting us with unstinted loyalty and unstinted generosity. There has been a spirit shown by the Colonies of affection to the mother country which has been the admiration of the world. May we not suggest that that unstinted loyalty and that unstinted generosity is to some extent

The Transvaal War

a reward for the consideration which has been shown the Colonies for some time past; and is it not right to remember that for years there has not been a Secretary for the Colonies who has so endeavoured to win the affection of the Colonies as the right hon. gentleman who now holds that office? You tax us with not having shown foresight and judgment. At all events our treatment of the Colonies has ensured, not their loyalty—that will always be there—but the enthusiastic impulse of the Colonies to come to the assistance of the mother country. We have a great work to do; we want to do that work, and now hon. gentlemen opposite move an amendment the only object of which could be to damage and weaken the Government, who are the instruments of the national will. If hon. gentlemen opposite do not wish to take our places and to bear the burden which rests on our shoulders, is it wise to endeavour to shake the confidence of the country in the men who must continue this war, and gather together all the forces of the Empire to bring it to a successful conclusion? Supposing there should be a division which could be called a bad division for the Government, what would the cheers which would greet that division mean? They would mean, 'We have succeeded in damaging and weakening the Government.' The time may come when we will be damaged. If the war is not successful, sweep us away as men who have no judgment, but do not lame the arm of the Executive Government when they have such a work on hand as we have got to do. There has been patriotic co-operation between us and some of the Liberal Party. We thank them for it. I believe this is a Parliamentary bad dream—an interlude between the patriotic attitude of these gentlemen a few weeks ago and the patriotic attitude which I hope we may look forward to when this debate closes. They have assured the country they will support us in going forward. I thank them for that, for it is more important than the petty criticisms to which we have been treated. We are the trustees of the nation for the work that has to be done. The nation will support us, I believe; and so long as we receive that support, God willing, we will fulfil our task."

Sir E. Clarke, among other things, said :—

"He did not believe the annexation of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State would be of the slightest benefit to the country. The annexation of the two Republics would compel us to very greatly increase our already enormous military expenditure, and it would not give us any advantage commensurate with the difficulties of administration. He had no desire to press his own views, which were singular, and certainly not popular, on that side of the House. He only pleaded that this question might be left open, and that Ministers might not pledge themselves to a course which would involve so great a sacrifice. While he agreed generally with the doctrine of Cabinet responsibility, he considered that the real responsibility for the war lay with the Colonial Secretary. The Prime Minister, in whom all England put the greatest confidence, having many other things to deal with, and being distressed by domestic anxieties, might not have been able to attend so closely as he otherwise would have done to South African affairs; but it could not be gainsaid that there were two men, one in this country and the other in South Africa, who must be associated with the beginning of the war. He wished that the highest sentiments of patriotism would induce those two men to leave to others the positions they now occupied. He believed that the difficulties involved in a solution of the questions arising out of the war would be increased by the fact that the lines of communication and action in South Africa were in the hands

The Vote of Censure

of the Colonial Secretary and Sir A. Milner. He had not a word to say about the honesty of these two gentlemen; but if, for a few weeks or a few months, in this grave national crisis and time of deep anxiety, others could take their places—if the Prime Minister himself would take under his own control the communications of the Colonial Office with South Africa, and if Lord Rosebery would give his services to the country, and go out to South Africa to assist in a solution of the difficulties, it would be a sacrifice not too great to ask even from the greatest men among us, and one for which the country would be very grateful. He had said that he was not going to make a controversial speech. He did not think he had. If he had, it had been with no intention of personal attack or party bitterness, but with the deep conviction that in deciding on the great issues with which Parliament had to deal we had to consider not only the things of to-day but the things of the future."

Mr. Chamberlain's speech on the 5th of February was an advance on former proceedings. Sir William Harcourt dilated on the indomitable energy of a free people fighting for their independence, praised the gallantry of the troops, and blamed the Government for being led by the opinions of the authors of the Jameson Raid, to which the Colonial Secretary made dignified reply. Finally he questioned—

"How do we meet the charge of mistakes? Not by denying the mistakes, but by saying what we have done and what we are doing to repair them. You say we sent too few troops. We are pouring troops into South Africa, and, as you have been told, in a few weeks you will have an army of 200,000. You said we were forgetful of the need for mounted men. We have been increasing the number of horse infantry until in a very short time the number of mounted men in the British forces will be almost as great, if not as great, as the total number of mounted men in the Boer army. You say our artillery is deficient and not heavy enough. We have sent battery after battery, until now you have an unexampled force of that arm. We have at the same time added a number of heavier guns. When the war began, no doubt the needs of the war were under-estimated at that time; it is part of the same mistake. We failed to respond as we ought to have done to the splendid offers that came from our Colonies. We accepted enough to show how much we valued their assistance, but we hesitated to put on them any greater strain than necessary. But what is happening now? They are multiplying their forces, and every offer is gratefully and promptly appreciated and accepted. And we shall have in this war before it is over an army of Colonials called to the aid of Her Majesty who will outnumber the British army at Waterloo and nearly equal to the total British force in the Crimea."

In conclusion he said:—

"In Africa these two races, so interesting, so admirable, each in its own way, though different in some things, will now, at any rate, have learned to respect one another. I hear a great deal about the animosity which will remain after the war, but I hope I am not too sanguine when I say that I do not believe in it. When matters have settled down, when equal rights are assured to both the white races, I believe that both will enjoy the land together in settled peace and prosperity. Meanwhile, we are finding out the weak spots in our armour,

The Transvaal War

and trying to remedy them. We are finding out the infinite potential resources of the Empire ; we are advancing steadily, if slowly, to the realisation of that great federation of our race which will inevitably make for peace, liberty, and justice."

On the following night Mr. Asquith, on Talleyrand's principle—that speech is given us to hide our thoughts—dilated interestingly on the position, his sympathies oscillating between the Opposition, the Government, and Mr. Kruger. Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman declared it to be the duty of the Opposition to press Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice's amendment to a division. He inferred that the conspiracy of the Cape Dutch was a chimera, and went so far as to suggest that when our military supremacy was asserted in South Africa the question of settlement might be left to decide itself *sine die* ! Said he : " Provided that our territories are free and our military supremacy asserted, what matters it at what time or what place a settlement is arrived at ? "

In his reply Mr. Balfour distinguished himself. He said that it was discovered that the War Office has more than fulfilled its promises, and appealed to the members of the Opposition who sympathised with the justice of the war to reflect before voting for the amendment. It was necessary to help the soldiers at the front by proving to them that they were supported by a united country, and that every hostile vote might induce or encourage our opponents to prolong the contest. He concluded by saying :—

" Can they contemplate with equanimity that their first action in a session of Parliament meeting under such circumstances should be a weakening of the Government, whose hands they profess to desire to strengthen—whose hands I believe they genuinely desire to strengthen—in every succeeding operation connected with this war ? Can they contemplate with equanimity the reflection that possibly their votes may lengthen the war, and, by lengthening it, may increase that tragic list of losses with which we are already too familiar ? If in giving their vote they add one fraction to the chances of a European complication, one fraction of a chance that an unnecessary life may be lost or a family thrown into mourning, can they easily reconcile that with their duty towards their own principles and to that country of which they are, I believe, as devoted servants as we on this side of the House ? I think it is a violation of every Parliamentary tradition that men who desire to keep in office a Government should vote for an amendment which, if carried, will turn out that Government, and that it is contrary to every patriotic instinct to vote in a minority against the Government. The size of that minority will affect the whole course of European policy, the whole course of the war. I have stated the problem as it presents itself to my mind. I know that you are men of conscience and honour, and I must leave it to you to decide the problem, each man in his own case as his conscience and honour dictate. To the House at large I can only make one appeal. It is that we, who are the representatives of the country, may rise to the height reached by those whom we represent. I ask no more, and I can ask no more, of the House than that they should imitate, for they cannot exceed, the courage, steadfastness, resolution, and firmness under

The Vote of Censure

adversity, and the calmness of temper with which our countrymen all over the world have dealt with the situation in its entirety. If the House of Commons do, as no doubt they will, imitate, for they cannot better, the conduct of those who have sent them here, then who can doubt that the clouds by which we are at present surrounded will in a short time be dissipated and the Empire will issue from the struggle in which it is now engaged stronger, no only in its own consciousness of strength, but in the eyes of the civilised world."

In the end, by 352 to 139—a majority of 213—the vote of censure on the Government moved by Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice was defeated. The decision adequately expressed the feelings of the country. It must be remembered that many of the Government supporters were in South Africa, consequently a total poll of 491 represented a heavy vote. The following list serves to show the number of members of both Houses who had sacrificed party spirit to patriotic convictions, and had proceeded to the front:—

HOUSE OF LORDS.—Earl of Airlie, commanding 12th Lancers; Earl of Albemarle, lieutenant-colonel, City of London Imperial Volunteers; Lord Basing, major, 1st Dragoons; Lord Castletown, special service, South Africa; Lord Chesham, commanding a battalion of Imperial Yeomanry; Earl Cowley, lieutenant, Imperial Yeomanry; Lord Denman, lieutenant, Imperial Yeomanry; Earl of Dudley, D.A.A.G. for Imperial Yeomanry; Earl of Dundonald, C.B., major-general, commanding 3rd Brigade (Natal) Cavalry Division; Earl of Dunraven, captain, Imperial Yeomanry; Earl of Erroll, special service, South Africa; Earl of Essex, second in command of battalion of Imperial Yeomanry; Earl of Fingal, lieutenant, Imperial Yeomanry; Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, G.C.B., K.C.M.G., Chief of the Staff; Earl of Leitrim, lieutenant, Imperial Yeomanry; Earl of Longford, captain, Imperial Yeomanry; Lord Lovat, captain, Lord Lovat's Corps; Duke of Marlborough, staff captain for Imperial Yeomanry; Lord Methuen, K.C.V.O., C.B., commanding 1st Division in South Africa; Duke of Norfolk, K.G., captain, Imperial Yeomanry; Lord Roberts of Kandahar, K.P., G.C.B., G.C.I.E., G.C.S.I., V.C., Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief; Lord Romilly, special service, South Africa; Lord Rosmead, major, 6th Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers; Duke of Roxburghe, lieutenant, Royal Horse Guards; Earl of Scarborough, second in command of battalion of Imperial Yeomanry; Earl Sondes, lieutenant, Imperial Yeomanry; Duke of Westminster, A.D.C. to Governor; Lord Wolverton, second lieutenant, Somersetshire Yeomanry Cavalry; Lord Zouche, lieutenant, Imperial Yeomanry.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.—Mr. W. Allen, trooper, Imperial Yeomanry; Hon. A. B. Bathurst, captain, 4th Battalion Gloucester Regiment; Colonel A. M. Brookfield, commanding battalion of Imperial Yeomanry; Lieutenant-Colonel R. G. W. Chaloner, commanding battalion of Imperial Yeomanry; Hon. T. H. Cochrane, captain, 4th Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders; Lord A. F. Compton, captain, Imperial Yeomanry; Viscount Cranborne, commanding 4th Battalion Bedford Regiment; Mr. W. Bromley-Davenport, captain, Imperial Yeomanry; Sir J. Dickson-Poynder, lieutenant, Imperial Yeomanry; Viscount Folkestone, major, 1st Wilts Volunteer Rifle Corps; Mr. W. R. Greene, lieutenant, Imperial Yeomanry; Hon. J. Guest, lieutenant, Imperial Yeomanry; Mr. G. Kemp, captain, Imperial Yeomanry;

The Transvaal War

Mr. E. H. Llewellyn, major, 4th battalion Somerset Light Infantry; Mr. H. L. B. McCalmont, commanding 6th battalion Royal Warwick Regiment; Mr. F. B. Mildmay, lieutenant, Imperial Yeomanry; Viscount Milton, lieutenant, Imperial Yeomanry; Mr. D. V. Pirie, with Remounts Department, South Africa; Lord Stanley, special service, South Africa; Lord Edmund Talbot, special service, South Africa; Viscount Valentia, A.A.G. for Imperial Yeomanry; Major W. H. Wyndham-Quin, captain, Imperial Yeomanry; Major the Hon. H. V. Duncombe, adjutant, Imperial Yeomanry; Sir Elliott Lees, captain, Imperial Yeomanry; Sir S. Scott, lieutenant, Imperial Yeomanry.

KIMBERLEY

There was little bombardment after the 25th of November, and though not living on the fat of the land, the garrison was not short of provisions. Mr. Rhodes, with characteristic forethought, now caused the formation of a committee to inquire into the resources of those dependent on the men killed, with a view to compensating them for their loss, and in other ways exerted himself for the welfare of sufferers in the town.

Considerable friction occurred between the civil and military authorities. The clashing of wills was inevitable in so small an area, for Colonel Kekewich represented military power, while Mr. Rhodes could be no other than he is, and ever has been—a power in himself. It was unfortunate that two such forces should have been placed in collision, but it remains to the credit of both that, in spite of the tension of the situation, they should have co-operated to the end to save the town from the common enemy, and protect the interests and lives of all who, but for this co-operation, might have suffered much more intensely than they did.

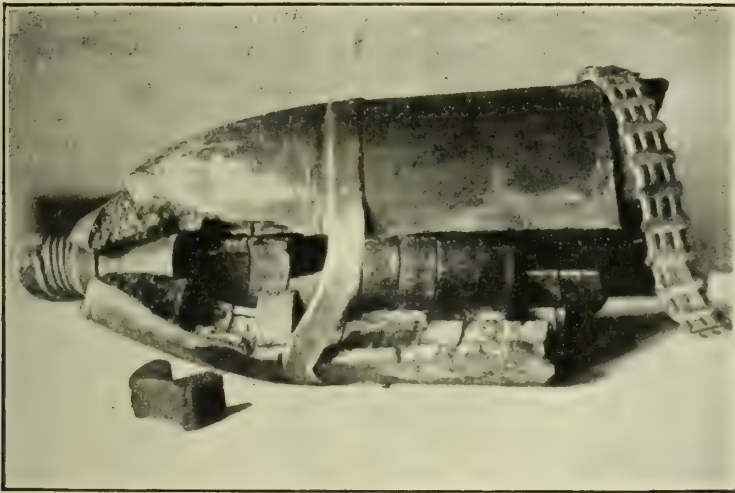
Early on the morning of the 9th of December a force with a battery under Colonel Chamier—to whom the efficient and mobile condition of the artillery was due—made a reconnaissance to the north. The Lancashire's Mounted Infantry and two guns were posted on Otto's Kopje while the Cape Police protected the Dam Wall. The Kimberley Light Horse in the centre extemporised some rifle-pits out of some prospectors' huts in order to cover retreat when necessary.

The enemy were screened by the debris of a wall at Kamfeens, but when the boom of the British gun burst out and a shell roared in their midst, they hurriedly sought cover in their foremost rifle-pits, whence with great energy they "sniped" in the direction of the officers who were superintending the operations. Meanwhile tremendous barking of cannon and ping-ping of rifles continued, the Boers having got the range of Otto Kopje to perfection. The troops had an exceedingly hard time, but continued their operations till dusk. They lost only one killed and four wounded.

Kimberley

On the wise principle that it is safer to act early on the aggressive if you do not want to have to act late on the defensive, the smart little force indulged in more military movements.

Colonel Kekewich's general plan for the defence of Kimberley was based on the principle of always keeping the enemy on the move and constantly in fear of attack from an unexpected quarter, but the immediate object of the numerous sorties and demonstrations in force now made by the garrison was to assist the operations of Lord Methuen. The Colonel explained that, "when the advance of the Relief Column from the Orange River commenced, and I was put in possession of information concerning the probable date of its arrival at Kimberley, I adopted such measures as I hoped would cause the retention of a large force of the enemy in my immediate neighbourhood, and thus enable the Relief Column to deal with the Boer force in detail."



SHELL PICKED UP IN KIMBERLEY STREETS. Photo by Alf. S. Hosking, Cape Town.

As the portions of mounted corps were continually employed, the work which fell on the detachment, 1st Batt. Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, Cape Police, Diamond Fields Horse, Kimberley Light Horse, and the Diamond Fields Artillery, was very arduous; but the bravery and dash of these troops was unending. Colonel Murray, of the Loyal North Lancashire, was invaluable in many capacities, and Captain O'Brien of the same regiment, in command of a section of the defences, was unfailing in energy and zeal. Cool as the proverbial cucumber were Major Rodger of the Diamond Fields Horse and Major May of the Diamond Fields Artillery. The motto of these officers was the reverse of that of the notable *gens d'armes*, for they were "always there when wanted," and gene-

The Transvaal War

rally in the fore-front. The officers of the Kimberley Regiment, too, were conspicuous for courage, coolness, and sagacity. They knew as by intuition what was wanted and did it. From Colonel Finlayson, who commanded the regiment, to Surgeon-Major Smith, who tended the wounded in the field, there was none who did not contribute to the stock of efficiency which was placed at the disposal of the Colonel.

On the 20th of December, the mounted detachments under Colonel Peakman, with maxims and 7-pounders under Colonel May, started off in the pitch darkness of 2 A.M., and marched through Kenilworth in the direction of the wreck of Webster's Farm, and on towards Tollpan in the Free State. British cannonading then took place, the Kimberley guns shelling Tollpan Homestead at 2500 yards' range, and the Boer gun on Klippiesspan ridge returning the compliment with interest. Fortunately the hostile shells burrowed deep in the sandy soil, and consequently little damage was done. The Boers were found to be very comfortably situated at the three corners of a six-mile triangle—at Coetgie, Scholtz, and Alexandersfontein—commanding three separate sources of water supply. This reconnaissance was of importance, as the positions of the enemy's guns and outposts were determined, and the garrison was enabled to be on guard against raiders and snipers, and to protect itself, its patrols, and cattle from the fire of the enemy. In the matter of protecting the cattle from the tricks of the Dutchmen, as in many other ways, Mr. Fynn, manager of the De Beers farms, did splendid service. This gentleman was Mr. Rhodes's right-hand man, and as a natural consequence of the honour he enjoyed rose to every occasion that offered, now managing a corps of scouts, now superintending the conveyance of food, now dealing with truculent natives, and always conducting his varied avocations with immense energy and tact.

On the 22nd of December a good deal of martial activity took place. At cockcrow a detachment of mounted forces, with artillery and infantry, went west for the purpose of reconnoitring Voornitz-right and part of Weldermstkuil. On the right were the Diamond Fields Horse under Major Rodger, supported by a company of the North Lancashire Regiment under Lieutenant de Putron. Presently an animated cannonade began between the enemy's artillery from Kamferdam and the Diamond Fields Artillery guns on Otto's Kopje. In the centre Colonel Peakman, with the Kimberley Light Horse and Cape Police, proceeded along Lazaretto Ridge. There, before retreating, he made the necessary discoveries—firstly, that the Boer patrols were then the only occupants of the place, and secondly, that the enemy's reinforcements were advancing behind Wimbledon Ridge. Meanwhile Colonel Chamier on the left, with R.A. guns and an escort under Major Snow, was exchanging salutations with

Kimberley

the Boer guns posted in the earthwork in the centre of Wimbledon Ridge. This occupation was pursued for some time, during which the enemy were found to be rapidly approaching. Directly the guns were limbered up some 500 Boers came on the scene, and began to pour a fierce fire from the earthworks at the foot of the Ridge upon the Kimberley troops, who retired to cover. The object of the reconnaissance was gained, however, for it proved in what an inconceivably short space of time the enemy could summon his reinforcements, and, moreover, that three of his guns were yet in the neighbourhood of the town.

On Christmas Eve congratulations were received by flashlight signals from the Military Secretary at Cape Town :—

“Convey to Colonel Kekewich and all the garrison and inhabitants of Kimberley his Excellency's best wishes for their good luck on Christmas Day and in the coming New Year.”

Colonel Kekewich replied :—

“Kindly inform the Military Secretary that I and the garrison and inhabitants of Kimberley thank his Excellency for his kind message. We also wish respectfully to offer our very best wishes for Christmas and New Year.”

This little interchange of compliments caused infinite pleasure to those whose days were one unvarying round of trial and suspense. The weather was exceedingly hot ; at times the thermometer registered 105° in the shade, and life without absolute necessities in torrid weather is trying even to the patience of the active. To those whose intercourse with the world was confined to flashlight signals, it was barren in the extreme. But with much pluck they thus announced their sentiments in a journal called the *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, which still maintained a languishing existence : “Excepting two or three of our inhabitants who shared the terrible privations of the siege of Paris, few of us have ever spent such a Christmas before, and few will ever care to spend such a Christmas again. The scarcity of turkeys and plum-pudding at this time of traditional plenty need only distress the gourmand. The majority of the people of Kimberley are happily made of sterner stuff, and do not look for luxuries in a time of siege.” They were nevertheless not utterly plum-puddingless. Mr. Rhodes, with characteristic forethought, had caused to be cooked in the Sanatorium some two score of these bombshells to digestion, and had distributed them in each of the camps. Here they were devoured with much merrymaking and a general interchange of felicitations, which went on by telephone from one camp to another. From the Mounted Camp to the Royal Artillery : “Best wishes and longer range to your guns.” From the gunners, in return, while they kept one ear open for movement in the

The Transvaal War

direction of the Boers' "Susannah:" "May our range be always long enough for us to be guardian-angels to the Mounted Corps."

On the following day the artillery was at work responding to the salutes of the Boers, who commenced to fire with great activity after their Christmas rest. They dropped some thirty-five shells in the direction of the fort, and received nineteen well-directed replies. Two of the mines were fired by the thunderstorm of the previous night, but no one was injured. Food now was becoming more and more scarce, and those connected with the distribution of provisions had to exercise much forethought and economy.

The task of arranging for the victualling and supply of the garrison and 40,000 people in the town was undertaken by Major Gorle, Army Service Corps, and the zeal and resource which he brought to bear on his onerous duties were applauded on all sides. Of course there were found persons who, on the take-everything-from-everybody-else-and-give-it-all-to-me principle, thought they were badly treated, but these were the exception rather than the rule. The arrangements for milk were made by a special civil committee, consisting of Mr. Oliver, the Mayor, whose courage and energy in keeping up the spirits of the people were wonderful, Mr. Judge, and four visiting surgeons of Kimberley Hospital, Doctors Ashe, Watkins, Mackenzie, and Stoney. These made themselves notable for the untiring energy with which they devoted themselves to their incessant duties. They kept a sharp eye on the milk, serving it out cautiously at the depôt, and only to those who had a medical certificate that they required it. The Colonel was very appreciative of the help given by most of his civilian coadjutors, for, in reference to the difficulties of his position, he stated in his despatch: "It will be realised that, under the peculiar circumstances in which the defence of the scattered town, containing over 40,000 inhabitants and much valuable machinery, was entrusted in the first instance to a force consisting of about 570 Imperial troops and 630 Colonial troops, my efforts would have been of no avail had it not been for the valuable assistance and advice which many citizens afforded me in a military as well as a civil capacity."

Mr. Henderson, Captain Tyson of the Kimberley Club, and Dr. Smart collaborated with the ruling spirit of the place, organising relief committees, distributing thousands of pints of soup per diem, and apportioning such fruit and vegetables as were to be had for the good of those who were most sorely in need. That green stuffs were scarce may be gathered from the fact that the allowance for nine people for half a week was a bunch of five carrots, four lilliputian parsnips, and several beets (duodecimo editions). The garrison, later on, were glad of mangel-wurzels, when quantity rather than quality came to be appreciated.

Kimberley

The Boers were now beginning to build redoubts on Dronfield Kopjes, about a mile east of the railway and in a northerly direction, showing that whatever withdrawals might be going on from besieged places elsewhere, the City of Mines would receive its due of attention up to the last. The Boer prisoners inside the town presented quite a rejuvenated appearance, owing to the delicate attentions of Mr. Rhodes. Christmas saw them provided with new outfits, and a general air of cleanliness and health pervaded them. The invalids in hospital, both British and Boers, were visited frequently by the Colossus, whose generosity in the matter of delicacies, which were now very scarce, was highly appreciated.

Much of the Kimberley news was obtained through the energy and acuteness, almost amounting to genius, of the despatch-runners. Of these, Mr. Lumming of Douglas succeeded in getting in and out of the town with missives for and from Mr. Rhodes, always at tremendous risk. The Boers had offered a large reward for his capture. On one occasion, so as to evade observation in a district swarming with the enemy, he had to travel quadruped fashion on hands and knees for some thirty miles. Tales of the despatch-runners' ingenuity in all parts of the Colony were many. One Kaffir boy, though caught by the Boers and stripped by them, carried his despatch safely, it having been packed in a quill and hid in his nostril, while another—a canny Scot—concealed his treasure in the inmost recesses of a hard-boiled egg.

On the morning of the 27th of January the mounted troops under the indefatigable Colonel Peakman at an early hour reconnoitred the Boer position near the Premier mine. The Boers were indulging in a last little doze, when some shells were neatly dropped into their laager. The alarum was effective. They were up and doing in no time, and set to work firing with the utmost vigour, but their shots were not accurate and much waste of ammunition took place. It may be remembered that Colonel Peakman, Kimberley Light Horse, after the death of Colonel Turner was selected for the command of the mounted troops in Kimberley. A tower of strength of himself, he was surrounded by a gallant crew, among whom were Major Scott, V.C., Captains Ap-Bowen and Mahoney (both severely wounded on the 25th of November), Captains Robertson and Rickman. There were also in the corps several lieutenants conspicuous for dash and daring, notably Lieutenants Hawker (wounded 22nd November), Harris, and Chatfield. Of the Colonel an amusing tale was told, which, if not *vero*, was certainly *bentrovato*, and served to cheer up those who needed to salt the monotonous flavour of daily life. It fell to the duty of Colonel Peakman to introduce horse-flesh at the officers' mess, a ticklish task, and one that required considerable tact. When the dish was served, the Colonel

The Transvaal War

said, "Gentlemen, as I was unable to get the whole of our ration in beef, a part of it had to be taken in horse-flesh. Here is the beef," said he, carving at the joint opposite him, "that at the other end of the table is the horse. Any one who prefers it may help himself." No one accepted the invitation, and after there had been a great run on the beef, the Colonel suddenly said, "By Jove, I'm mistaken; of course *this* joint is the horse, the other is the beef!" Thus the palates of the heroes of the Kimberley Light Horse were educated to the fare that was shortly to become unvaried.

Later on, a chunk of donkey occasionally replaced the equine morsel, and cats, it was noticed, began to be less in evidence. There were whispers—hints—— But to proceed to facts.

On the 29th a tussle took place between the foe and a man named Sheppy, who, with twelve mounted natives, was herding a thousand De Beers horses and mules. The cattle-drivers were at work when out from the bushes rushed a hundred Boers. These at once opened fire, but the herdsman managed to return it and effect their escape.

The transformation of diamond-diggers into warriors was an entire novelty, of which Kimberley boasted not a little. The entire community of the De Beers Company were now soldiers of the Queen, receiving the same rate of pay as before, with food in addition. The total white population in the town was 14,000, and of these 6000 were employés of the mine, men from Natal. The Company worked wonders—of course under the auspices of the ruling genius of Kimberley. They stuck at nothing, from assisting with food supplies—distributing soup in gallons—to providing for the employment of upwards of 4000 natives in making improvements in the town. Sanitation too they undertook when contractors failed, and, when the supply of water was cut off at the main reservoir by the enemy, they came to the rescue by providing another source of water supply.

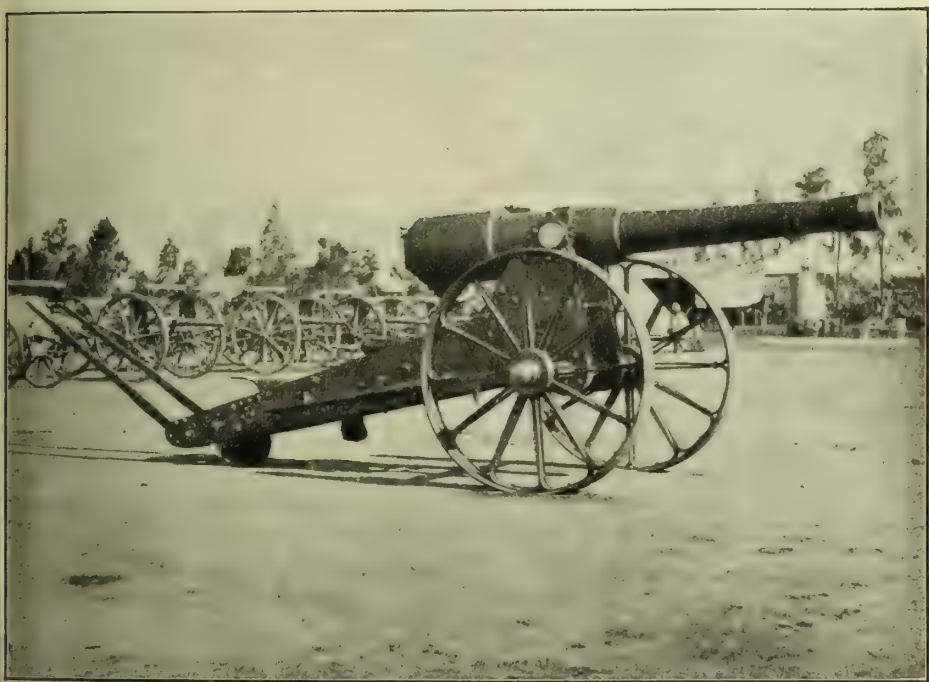
Owing to the excellent management and regulation of stores, the community had hitherto been enabled to live at normal prices, and food had been within the reach of all. But now the pinch of the siege began to be felt. Luxuries such as eggs, vegetables, &c., were naturally scarce, but horse-flesh even grew to be limited, for there was little forage left. The tramcars ceased to work, and Dr. Ashe predicted that presently there would be "no carts save military ones and the doctors' and the hearse!"

People had to take their meat allowance half in beef and half in horse-flesh, and the over-fastidious were but meagrely nourished. These, however, soon came to "take their whack" of horse-flesh gladly, and some even declared that horse, by any other name, would be quite appetising! Conversation largely consisted of speculations regarding food or its absence, and once or twice there was a rub with the military. Dr. Ashe expressed himself frankly when

Kimberley

confronted with red-tape difficulties, addressed the Colonel—of course, minding p's and q's, for people had to look to the dotting of i's and crossing of t's in those days—and suggested that, "in matters which affected the health and feeding of the people," the doctors thought that, in virtue of their knowledge of town, climate, and people, they might be consulted. The objection to the red-tape difficulty being proved sound, the Colonel at once altered the routine, but, said Dr. Ashe, "he flatly declined to ask any opinion from the general body of doctors, as they might have ideas which would affect the military situation."

The new gun, "Long Cecil," manufactured in De Beers, was



"LONG CECIL," MADE AT THE DE BEERS MINES. Photo by D. Barnett, War Correspondent.

greatly prized. It distinguished itself on its début by plumping a shell in the centre of the Kamfersdam head-laager exactly over the position of the Dutchmen's gun. Bombardment continued spasmodically, sometimes at night, the shells entering several houses and "making hay" of the furniture; but wantonly barbarous was the attack on the laager containing the women and children, which took place on the 23rd of January. One of the little innocents was killed and another probably maimed for life. On the 24th more bombardment began as early as four in the morning, and firing continued

The Transvaal War

all day. The worst feature in the affair was the attack—deliberate and premeditated it appeared—on the hospital, which caused general grief and indignation. There was no excuse for such inhumanity, as the place was distinguished by two Red Cross flags.

Very lamentable was this habit of the Boers to violate the sacred rules of the Geneva Convention, for it alienated even those who were in sympathy with their cause. They could not plead ignorance of the rules of warfare, for at one time they ignored these rules to play the barbarian, while at another they utilised them to act the poltroon. The history of the Convention may not be generally known. It was promoted in 1864 and subsequently signed by all the Continental Powers. It was decided that—

1. Ambulances and military hospitals were to be recognised as neutral, and as such to be protected and respected by all belligerents.

2. The *personnel* of these hospitals and ambulances, including the *intendance*, the sanitary officers, officers of the administration, as well as military and civil chaplains, were to be benefited by the neutrality.

3. The inhabitants of the country rendering help to the sick and wounded were to be respected and free from capture.

4. The sick and wounded were to be attended to without distinction of nation.

5. A flag and a uniform were to be adopted for the hospitals, ambulances, and convoys of invalids; an armlet or badge for the *personnel* of the ambulances and hospitals.

6. The badge was to consist of a red cross on a white ground.

Committees were formed throughout Europe and America to carry out this convention, and the Society worked under the title of the "International Society of Aid for the Sick and Wounded." It played its first important part in 1870 in the Franco-German War, before which time battlefields had been scenes of almost inhuman torture.

Now, in consequence of the brutal disregard of a world-appreciated agreement, the Boers—in many ways men of fine character—were placing themselves beneath contempt. Their conduct also to the loyalists and non-belligerents was also causing exasperation.

The ministers of all denominations—Wesleyan, Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregational, and Jewish—all united in condemning the Boer Government and its methods. They were especially scandalised at the inhumanity of the Dutch commandoes, who intermittently poured shells not only into the heart of the town, but into the suburbs, where women and children were known to congregate, while leaving for the most part unmolested the forts occupied by the citizen-soldiers. Homes were destroyed mothers and children stricken down, and some killed. These might have been looked upon as

Kimberley

the accidents of war had it not been confessed in Boer papers that such acts were deliberately committed and vaunted.

Spasmodic bombardment took place during the evening of the 24th, and continued through the night, striking some buildings—the hospital and other defenceless positions—and maiming a woman and her child. Another child was killed. Profound admiration was expressed by all in the achievements of “Long Cecil,” and the utility of the new long-range weapon was highly appreciated. Indeed, Mr. Rhodes viewed this Kimberley masterpiece with quite a paternal eye, and his pleasure in firing it was considerable.

Enough could not be said of the splendid valour and pertinacity of the townspeople, who co-operated in the warlike proceedings as though they had been to the manner born. Though the fortification belt was some twelve miles in circumference, at all points it was protected by these amateurs of the sword, who, under no military obligations whatever till sworn in on the immediate emergency, rose to the occasion with a chivalric warmth that was as perfectly amazing as it was admirable. Devotion to the Sovereign Lady who rules the Empire was never more steadfastly shown and more ardently maintained.

The zeal and the “go” of the Cape Police was notable. Among the most prominent of the corps were Colonel Robinson, gallant Major Elliot and Major Ayliff (wounded on December 3), who was brave as he was tactful. Perpetually useful and conspicuously gallant were Captains Colvin, Crozier, White, and Cummings. Their duties, most difficult, were almost interminable.

Life was monotonous in the extreme. From the town it was possible on clear days to view the Modder River balloon, and the occasional sight of it afforded a stimulus to the drooping spirits of the inhabitants. Its rotund form floating so peacefully high in air seemed like a harbinger of hope promising and consoling, and teaching the lesson of patience and perseverance that overcome all things! Of course, it was only the sentimentalists of the community who thus interpreted the language of the aerial monster, but these, like the people who find sermons in stones, promptly took heart, and bore their trials with renewed dignity and pluck. Both these qualities were in great demand, for the Boers and their tactics were exhausting to the patience of the most forbearing. Their pertinacity was great. At one moment they would pour shells into the town, making hearts palpitate or stand still in horror at the gruesome fracas; at others they would persistently “snipe” from hidden corners and bushes, and render movements in the open, to say the least of it—inconvenient.

Sniping always continued, though, for a day or two, no serious bombardment took place. Indeed, there was reason to believe that

The Transvaal War

a Boer gun was *hors de combat*. The report came in that "Susannah" had burst. There was general jubilation. Later on it filtered out that "Susannah" was "all serene," but this was doubted. The sanguine hoped against hope. We are ready enough to believe what we wish to be true, and finally, for want of something to discuss, the question of "Has she burst, or has she not burst?" was bandied about in the tone of a popular riddle. Unfortunately "Susannah" was intact, as subsequent experience proved. Not only was "Susannah" herself again, but it was reported that a considerable Boer reinforcement had arrived in the neighbourhood, and that three guns from Spyfontein were being ranged in attitude to defy "Long Cecil," whose prowess was more decided than pleasant. Still the inhabitants bore up very creditably, and enlivened themselves continually with concerts or entertainments of some kind. The programmes, it must be noted, were always marked "weather and Boers permitting"—a modern adaptation of the customary *D.V.*

The Boer spies took a lively interest in all that concerned Mr. Rhodes, and hopes were entertained that before long some one would receive the price of his capture. But this gentleman pursued his avocations in the town and its suburbs with unabated interest, arranging for the comfort of the refugees, and evincing paternal solicitude in the laying out of new suburbs, and the construction of a regular row of bomb-proof shelters, which were being excavated at Kenilworth. People now became great connoisseurs on the virtue of brick, old and new, and began to mistrust corrugated iron as affording less protection from the artillery fire of the enemy. They became judges also of shell—of the peculiarities of shrapnel and ring shells—and sapiently discussed the merits of time fuses and percussion fuses. Food, however, was the prime subject of conversation—a subject of "devouring" interest, some one said. The refugee fund now amounted to £3000, owing to the united subscriptions of Mr. Rhodes and the De Beers Company. It was none too much, as the demand on its resources was some £600 weekly.

The Colossus, regardless of the fate that hung over the town, continued to make plans and projects for the development of the place. On a high plateau he purposed to create a new suburb, and the name will doubtless bear a relationship to the great events of 1900. A column was in course of erection to commemorate the siege, but the tale of bombardment, writ large on many of the buildings, is one that will scarcely be forgotten, and forms memorial enough. Some curious damage was done, a shrapnel shell electing to penetrate the wall of a draper's shop and wound a feminine dummy and smash a wax effigy of a boy used as a clothes model. Fortunately few human beings suffered. Great precautions were taken for the safety of the inhabitants, and a look-out was kept, so



LIEUT.-GENERAL THOMAS KELLY-KENNY, C.B.

Photo by C. Knight, Aldershot.

Kimberley

as to give warning by whistle whenever the smoke of the enemy's guns breathed a hint of coming destruction. A calculation was made as to the sum total expended by guns, British and Dutch, and it was discovered that Kimberley had fired 1005 shells, while the besiegers had spent three times that number. The total loss of life attributable to shell fire amounted at this date to about twelve killed.

Affairs within the town were now growing almost as bellicose as affairs without it. Continued friction generates heat, and of this throughout the siege there had been more and more as time went on. It was quite evident that Kimberley was not sufficiently large to afford an arena for the combat of brains *versus* military discipline, and that the patience of the besieged was nearing the snapping-point. Indeed there was doubt as to whether operations for the relief of Kimberley would be pursued, and it is averred that the Commander-in-Chief sent a message to Mr. Rhodes, saying, "Hope I shall not be compelled to leave you in the lurch." Naturally the Kimberley barometer fell to zero. Then came rumours of the coming of Lord Roberts, but these scarcely served to allay the general impatience.

A curious incident occurred on the 29th. Some thirty-five Zulus took their departure. They had been ordered by their chief to leave the town, but when they obeyed they had promptly to return, as they encountered the Boers, who threatened to shoot them.

At this time food was becoming more and more scarce; even horse-flesh was distributed with caution. Milk was obtainable only by the invalids, and some four hundred babes died for want of proper nourishment. It was pathetic to see people standing at the Town Hall waiting eagerly to take their turn for the scanty portion of meat that could be provided for them. The ceremony of the drawing of meat rations had an aspect almost comic in its desperate seriousness. Matutinally at 5.30 A.M. might be seen a vast concourse of persons scampering in hot haste to gain a front place. So animated was the early bird to catch its morning worm, that it was up and doing before the regulated hour, 5.30 (fixed by proclamation), before which time people were forbidden to leave their houses. The police put a stop to this superactivity, and hungry persons were seen from five to the half-hour waiting patiently at their gates till the exact moment should arrive when they could make a dash for a place in the tremendous crush which, two by two, gathered outside the market.

Marvellous was the rapidity with which this vast crowd, at hint of a shell, would drop to earth. As by some mechanical process there would come a bang, and then, like a card castle, the whole procession would drop flat. The Boers, knowing, most probably, that this was an eventful period of the morning, would invariably start off about six with a boisterous "good-morrow."

The Transvaal War

Gradually the rations grew shorter and shorter and shorter. They now consisted mainly of horse-meat, served out every second day, mealie meal, stamped mealies, with a sparse allowance of tea, coffee, and bread. For those who had children under three years of age one tin of milk was allowed. With this strong children could get along well, but there were many weakly ones, and these waned and waned till the baby funerals became pathetically frequent.

The Dutchmen were exceedingly ingenious in the invention of tricks and traps. One of these was to move a waggon with sixteen fat oxen in charge of but two men into the open Vlei below Taran-taal Ridge, and there to leave it, apparently unguarded, for two hours. They thought that this bait would lure forth the cattle-guard, but they were disappointed, for the authorities were too acute to allow them to get "a bite." They knew that in rear of the Vlei was a deep sand-drift, behind which a large body of men might be comfortably concealed, and consequently left waggon and cattle severely alone.

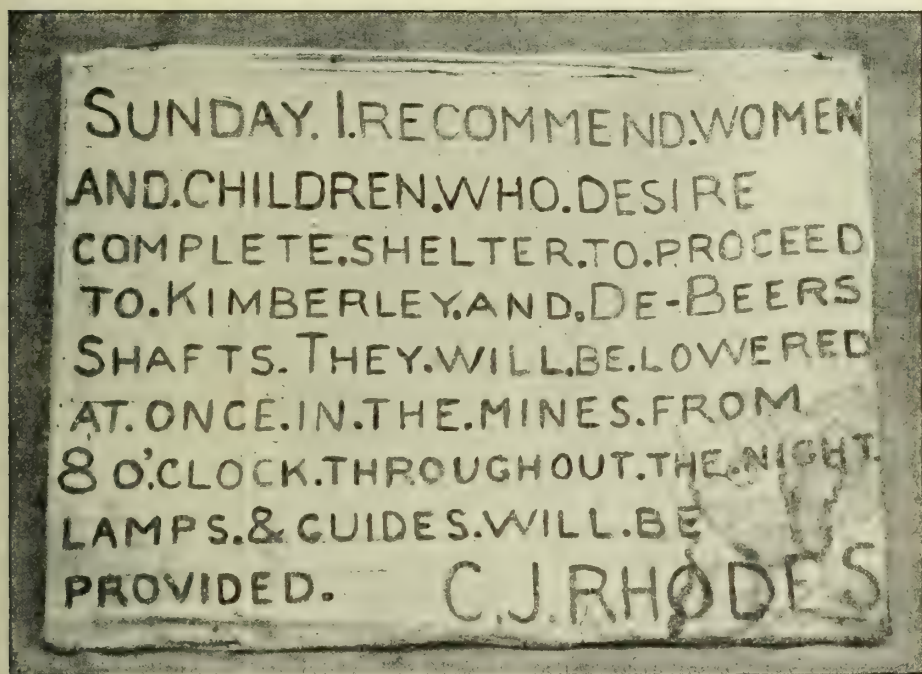
After this began the bombardment by a new Boer gun—a diabolical instrument, whose perfections were hymned by an artillery expert, who declared it to be one of the most perfect pieces of ordnance ever made! A correspondent in the *Daily Telegraph* described the terrifying effect produced on the nerves of the sick and the weakly. He went on: "The shock caused by the firing of this gun was distinctly perceptible five feet under ground at a distance of five miles, and the miniature earthquake thus created was clearly registered by the new seismograph at Kenilworth, the pendulum of which remained perfectly stationary during the firing of the smaller guns, or the passage of the most heavily laden trains or vehicles at very close quarters."

The 9th of February was a terrible day. There was crashing and booming from morning till night, and no one dared venture abroad. One inhabitant had his child killed under his very eyes and his wife mortally stricken down. Towards sundown a shell struck the Grand Hotel, killing Mr. Labram, the De Beers chief engineer, whose valuable brains had been the salvation of the place. He had constructed armoured engines, armoured trains, and had completed his ingenious labours by constructing the huge 4.1-inch gun, with carriage and shells complete—a triumph of science considering the conditions under which the achievement was attempted. Now he was gone, and Kimberley was vastly the poorer.

The bombardment was growing daily more severe. Each time the Boers fired their 100-pounder gun a bugle was blown from the conning tower and all ran to cover. There would be an interval of seven minutes between every shell, and the bombardment would last for about two hours. Then the Boers would take a rest, and,

Kimberley

after a breathing spell, begin again. By the kindness of Mr. Rhodes the mines now became harbours of refuge for thousands of women and children, who, huddled together in the 1200-foot level, were thus protected from the shells which were launched in the midst of the town. Those days in dark diamondiferous caverns were full of strange experiences. There, over a thousand shrinking beings found asylum, bedding, food, and such comfort as could be secured for them. There, babes were born into the world—human diamonds brought into the daylight from the grottoes of the millionaires—babes which surely should take some strange part in the drama of the century. It was an underground village swarming



PLACARD ERECTED BY MR. RHODES. Photo by F. H. Hancox, Kimberley.

with the weak and the distressed, a feminine populace, kept from panic and despair by the man who, large enough to make empires, yet proved himself capable of sympathy with the small sorrows and quakings of the sick and the fearful.

The experiences of a lady who enjoyed the hospitality of the mine were scarcely exhilarating. She said: "We went down the mine, but only stayed one day. Of course, one felt safe, but it was so miserable; still, it was another siege experience, the crowds of people down there. On the 1000-foot level were 500 persons alone,

The Transvaal War

and the buzz of tongues, and the children crying, and the noises altogether, besides the damp, were horrible; although Mr. Rhodes and those working under him did all in their power to make things as comfortable as possible. Hot coffee, soup, bread, milk for the children, everything obtainable was sent down; and some thousands of people were fed free of charge from the Saturday night till the following Friday morning. . . . Those people who run down Mr. Rhodes should have been here during the four months of the siege. The soup-kitchen was another of his institutions, threepence a pint for good soup, and those who had no money got it free."

Now that the nerve-destroying capabilities of the Boers' 100-pounder gun were proved, and Mr. Rhodes and other citizens were conscious of the immense amount of danger to town and life that must result from the bombardment, the Colossus, in conjunction with the Mayor and others, forwarded to Colonel Kekewich a letter which he begged might be heliographed to headquarters. The letter ran:—

"KIMBERLEY, *February 10.*

"On behalf of the inhabitants of this town, we respectfully desire to be informed whether there is an intention on your part to make an immediate effort for our relief. Your troops have been for more than two months within a distance of little over twenty miles from Kimberley, and if the Spytfontein hills are too strong for them, there is an easy approach over a level flat. This town, with a population of over 45,000 people, has been besieged for 120 days, and a large portion of the inhabitants has been enduring great hardships. Scurvy is rampant among the natives; children, owing to lack of proper food, are dying in great numbers, and dysentery and typhoid are very prevalent. The chief food of the whites have been bread and horse-flesh for a long time past, and of the blacks meal and malt only. These hardships, we think you will agree, have been borne patiently and without complaint by the people. During the last few days the enemy have brought into action from a position within three miles of us a 6-inch gun throwing a 100-lb. shell, which is setting fire to our buildings and is daily causing death among the population. As you are aware, the military guns here are totally inadequate to cope with this new gun. The only weapon which gives any help is one of local manufacture. Under these circumstances, as representing this community, we feel that we are justified in asking whether you have any immediate intention of instructing your troops to advance to our relief. We understand large reinforcements have recently arrived in Cape Town, and we feel sure that your men at Modder River have at the outside 10,000 Boers opposed to them. You must be the judge as to what number of British troops would be required to deal with this body of men, but it is absolutely necessary that relief should be afforded to this place."

To this Lord Roberts replied:—

"I beg you represent to the Mayor and Mr. Rhodes as strongly as you possibly can the disastrous and humiliating effect of surrender after so prolonged and glorious a defence. Many days cannot possibly pass before Kimberley will be relieved, as we commence active operations to-morrow. Future

Kimberley

military operations depend in a large measure on your maintaining your position a very short time longer."

A great deal of gossip hung round the suppression of the *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, but the whole affair was merely a storm in the ink-pot resulting from the clashing of opinions civil and military. After the publication of a leading article on the 10th of February, an article with which Mr. Rhodes was entirely in accord, the military censor addressed the following letter to the editor:—

"ARMY HEADQUARTERS,
KIMBERLEY, February 10, 1900.

"SIR,—Since the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* has now on two occasions printed leading articles on the military situation which are extremely injurious to the interests of the army and the defence of this town, without previously submitting the same to the military censor, I am directed to inform you that from this date the proof of the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* must be submitted to me before the copies of any daily number, leaflet, or other form of publication is issued to the public.

"I am further requested to inform you, in your own interests, that on the two occasions referred to you have committed the most serious offences dealt with by the Army Act, under which Act you are liable to be tried.—Yours faithfully,
W. A. O'MEARA, Major, Military Censor."

The military censor was within his rights. The editor, after the manner of editors, did not care to be muzzled, so the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* was temporarily suspended.

The editorial chair at the time was not an enviable berth, owing to the invasion of shells from the 100-pounder gun, therefore the holiday may have been beneficial in more ways than one.

The new gun, mounted on the kopje at Kamferdam, was determined to make life hideous, and so incessantly swept the neighbourhood that a state of panic began to prevail even among those who had hitherto borne themselves with unconcerned front. In addition to this perpetual tornado of horror the pinch of famine was becoming sharper, and the question of relief seemed to be growing into one of "now or never." Despair seized on many. They began to count the days, and wonder when it would all end, and whether indeed it would ever end at all! Two days—three days—five days—the 15th of February! Then, dramatically, as in a fairy tale or a stage play, came the rumour of help, the whisper that French, the gallant, the energetic, the invincible, was coming, as on the wings of the wind—coming to restore freedom to those who, in their tedious imprisonment, were fainting with hope deferred. In an instant all was changed. The rumour became reality. Colonel Kekewich and his staff rode forth, and it was as though the good fairy had waved a wand. In an instant the dismal streets seemed

The Transvaal War

to grow gaudy with flags, to flutter and flare as with the hues of the butterfly. Panic ceased, and gave way to almost hysterical joy. People laughed, chaffed, threw up their hats. The mines disgorged their human wealth—some thousand of women and children, who came forth alacrious, with swinging step and loudly babbling—babbling like mountain torrents let loose from the ice of winter! It was a scene for painter, not for penman; for who shall describe wrinkles of anxiety swept suddenly away, pangs of hunger allayed by thrills of glad excitement, nervous exhaustion magically forgotten, and all this simply because there was dust in the distance—the dust of coming feet—the dust of the British cavalry sweeping nearer and nearer on a glorious errand of deliverance!

Five minutes later the looked-for moment had arrived. Anticipation had given way to fact—the 124 days' siege was at an end. Yet there were some who could scarce believe their ears. A man, hearing that General French had arrived, approached a trooper who was holding a horse outside the Club, and asked if the good news was true. "Yes," was the reply; "I'm 'is horderly; this is 'is 'at, and over there is 'is 'orse!" And the Kimberly man stared at the three objects before him as though he could never take his fill of satisfaction.

GENERAL FRENCH'S RIDE

And now, as the conjuror says, to explain how it was all done. The object of the combined movements was to turn Cronje's position, which extended west and east from Majersfontein to Koodoesberg Drift on the one side towards Klip Drift on the Modder on the other, to relieve Kimberley, and, if possible, cut off the retreat of the Boers to Bloemfontein and invest the whole force. This stupendous programme was unfolded to General French and his A.A.G. Colonel Douglas Haig at the time already mentioned, when the great cavalry leader mysteriously ran down from Colesberg to the Cape. Here the plans for the future campaign were discussed, and here General French agreed to embark on an enterprise which had it failed in a single particular might have brought about "such a disaster as would have shaken England's dominion in South Africa to its very foundation." This is the opinion of Captain Cecil Boyle, a splendid young officer, who, when asked to join General French's staff as galloper, was almost overcome with joy. But the plan did not fail: indeed it succeeded beyond expectation, and the relief of Kimberley, accomplished solely by the mounted troops—said to be the largest force ever commanded by a British General—was a feat scarcely to be excelled in the annals of warfare. This feat was performed between the 11th and the 15th of February, during which the Division experienced hardships of

General French's Ride

every kind. Horses and men were worked incessantly, without a day's rest and in a broiling sun, which literally baked every portion of the human frame exposed to it, and grilled the eyeballs, causing the most acute suffering to man and beast. Supplies and forage ran short, and the horses were reduced to 1½ lb. of corn a day, while the men lived finally from hand to mouth, killing and eating as they went along, now a sheep, now a goat, and presently nothing but boiled mealie cobs. Water was so scarce, and the sufferings of the animals so terrible, that when a stream was once encountered, the brutes, wild with an anguish of delight, tore towards it in their frantic career, becoming absolutely beyond control, and carrying their riders straight into the river. Some in this way were drowned. Many horses died of exhaustion. At the end, out of 8000, only 5400 remained. But all discomforts were forgotten in the success of the achievement, which from first to last was conducted with admirable *finesse* and consummate dash. Indeed this marvellous ride is looked upon by those who could technically criticise the difficulty and daring of the enterprise as one of the finest achievements of British arms.

On the 11th of February the great cavalry division under General French started. With marvellous rapidity, and with a vast amount of mystery, the troops had gathered together in the neighbourhood of Enslin or Graspan, and commenced to move south-east on the now celebrated march for the relief of Kimberley. So swiftly was everything planned, and so dexterously was it accomplished, that even the wary Cronje, whose spies were everywhere, was incapable of believing that the detested rooineks were advancing with the rapidity of a cyclone for the purpose of sweeping him and his burghers from their comfortable positions. But a clean sweep they made nevertheless. Before the British advance Dutchmen fled precipitately from their farms, leaving their sweet mealie pap *in statu quo*, and all their effects exactly as they had been using them.

They carried to Cronje wild rumours of British multitudes approaching, and preparing to make a last frontal attack upon Majersfontein, rumours which exactly suited Lord Roberts' strategic plan. Cronje instantly primed himself for the reception of the British, strengthening his fortifications and keeping his eye on the west, where he knew the Highland Brigade was operating. This again was precisely what Lord Roberts had intended him to do.

Meanwhile, in the light of the stars, the great cavalry division with its batteries of artillery was on the move, rumbling cautiously through the mysterious, Boer-haunted regions under the guidance of the Hon. Major Lawrence, Chief of the Intelligence Department, and travelling many miles before sunrise on its important journey to Ramdam. Here horses were watered, men rested, details and remounts

The Transvaal War

from Orange River picked up. On the morning of Monday the 12th, the troops were again on the move, starting at 3 A.M., and endeavouring to cover as many miles as possible before the sun should rise and make the whole earth into a scorching, blistering wilderness. But now, in return for the cool night air, they had to contend with jetty obscurity. Very slow, therefore, was their progress. When helped by the dawn they got along faster, and soon the whole division reached Waterval. Here extra precautions were taken, for none knew how many Dutchmen might be ensconced in the surrounding kopjes or whether the drift might be swarming with Boers. But they were not long left in doubt. A Boer shell greeted the troops with such nicety of range that the General and his staff barely escaped. Colonel Eustace, R.H.A., immediately turned his attention to the hostile gun, and shortly silenced it, but the enemy still held on.

Dekiel's Drift is commanded by kopjes, having on the bank an octopus-armed donga which cuts deeply into the soil. At this drift the Boers endeavoured to make a stand, but the Mounted Infantry and Roberts' Horse were too much for them. Unfortunately, Captain Majendie, second in command of the latter regiment, was shot from Drift Kopje, in the shadow of which his remains were interred. There was no time for expression of mourning and regret; the Boers had to be routed, and presently, finding their rear threatened, they went streaming away from their strong position, taking with them their guns. After this the drift was taken possession of, and in the rays of the setting sun the disciplined hosts—brigade after brigade—crossed the Riet River, keeping possession of both banks.

Horses and men were wearied out, scorched, and famishing, and there was a general sense of relief when at last they were joined by Lord Kitchener and staff and the Sixth Division, with convoys of provisions and fodder. At dawn on Tuesday a great deal had to be done—breakfast finished, nose-bags filled, &c., before it was possible to order the advance. Day was well developed by the time the brigades had started, and now came the exceeding trials of their march. The level veldt was like a mirror to a brazen sky, and all through the sweltering hours when the sun blazed its strongest, men and horses, shadeless, parched, and sparsely fed, moved on mile after mile on their imperative errand without pause and without relief. Even a beautiful well of water, which tempted them to distraction, had to be passed by untouched. It was necessary to reserve it for the infantry, who were following on the morrow. So dry, dejected, yet determined, they went on and on, crossed the districts of Poortje, Zwart Kopjes, Kromkuil, and made a brief halt at Wegdraai. From thence they swung along past pans and kopjes and plains, due north to Klip Drift.

General French's Ride

Captain Boyle, in the *Nineteenth Century*, gave a fresh and spirited account of their movements on this important and critical march.

"The distance covered in extended order was great, and to save the artillery horses Major Lawrence directed the columns by a slight *détour* north-easterly, leaving Jacobsdal some seven or eight miles to our left. The heat was now intense, and was further increased by the accidental burning of the veldt over a large area, thereby destroying our field-cable, as we learnt afterwards. From flank to flank the distance was so great that at times the General's gallopers could not move their horses out of a walk, though the message was important, and everywhere men and horses alike suffered from sun and thirst.

"General Gordon's brigade, far away on the left, was ordered to bring up its left shoulders to meet what looked like an attack on the right, but the guns of the 1st Brigade put the enemy to flight, and the march was resumed in slightly different order. The left brigade, under General Gordon, was ordered to advance; the centre brigade, under General Broadwood, was deployed to the right; and the right brigade, under Colonel Alexander, was ordered to follow in the rear. From a little stone-covered knoll the General and his staff scanned the distant river and its banks eight miles off, and instantly determined to push on for the drift. 'Move up the whole division,' and the three gallopers started back with the order to the brigades, which had been halted meanwhile. General Gordon on the left, with the 9th and 16th Lancers and his guns, and General Broadwood on the right, with the 12th Lancers, Household Composite, and 10th Hussars, moved off at once; but Colonel Alexander's brigade was far in the rear—he had already lost sixty horses, and the rest could move but slowly. The artillery horses could scarcely drag their guns and waggons, but still the General determined to force the drift; and I believe this decision was one of the most critical in the relief of Kimberley, for, had we not gained the drift directly our presence was known, the enemy would most certainly have fortified a very strong natural position. But the General's mind was made up, and he was quick to act. Throwing Gordon on to the left to effect a crossing, and Broadwood some five miles away on his right, the advance to the river was made so swiftly that the enemy were absolutely surprised. After shelling for some time, Gordon crossed and went in pursuit. Only four guns out of twelve could come into action in the centre, but with such effect that the enemy shortly retreated over the hills. By this time General Broadwood had crossed on the right, and his brigade trumpeter sounded the 'pursue.' The general rout was now complete—camp, waggons, everything was in our hands. New bread was lying about on the

The Transvaal War

veldt and dough-tins ready to be placed on the fire, with such haste had the Boers left their position.

"My horse had died with my last message to the 1st Brigade, and I trudged on over the level veldt partly on foot, partly on ammunition waggons, over the last five miles, crossed the Modder River with the four guns of P and G Batteries, and went to congratulate the General, who was sitting on the north bank, on his splendid achievement; for by this last forced march of nearly ten miles he had won half his way to Kimberley. Little incidents after the rout were full of the humour that hangs around everything grave. One of the staff plunged into the river and caught some geese, but some one else ate them; a pig ran the gauntlet through the camp—amidst roars of laughter, even from the serious General—of lances, bayonets, knives, sticks, boots, water-bottles, anything to hand, and at length was caught by a lucky trooper, who shared his feast that night with his friends. A waggon of fresh fruit was taken, sufficient to make thirsty men's mouths water, but some thought the grapes were sour. Why the Boers retreated in such a hurry is difficult to understand, for the position and drift were very strong and easy to defend, especially against a spent foe; and, but for the quickness of the advance over the open veldt, which took the Boers completely by surprise, the division would have encountered a very nasty opposition."

The Dutchmen were pursued with splendid animation by General Gordon's jaded brigade, who succeeded, worn out as they were, in capturing some ambulance waggons and some Boer doctors; while General Broadwood's brigade, also worn out, chased the Boers into the far distance till absolute exhaustion forced the abandonment of the pursuit. So at the drift the cavalry division enjoyed its terribly needed repose. They had gone through an appalling ordeal, but it had been wonderfully surmounted, and the command of river both at Klip Drift and Klip Kraal, some miles to the east, had been secured.

On the 14th the Boers still continued to buzz about after the fashion of mosquitoes—now advancing, now retiring, worrying and annoying, but never coming boldly to the attack.

They made strong efforts to fathom the movements and designs of the British, but without success. Colonel Gorringe, Chief of Lord Kitchener's Staff, now arrived, and announced that Lord Kitchener and General Kelly-Kenny were advancing by night from Dekiel Drift, whereupon Captain Laycock, A.D.C., rode out and succeeded by midnight in conducting these officers safely to camp. In the small hours the Sixth Division, after a hard and really glorious march, which must be described anon, arrived. Thus his left flank being secured, General French was free to pursue his

General French's Ride

impetuous ride. This he did after handing over to the infantry the positions he had gained. While the cavalry division moved out, Kelly-Kenny's division—as in the game of “general post”—quickly shifted to the vacant place, thus making any return of the fleeing Boers impossible.

The three cavalry brigades then drew up in columns of brigade masses, with the seven batteries of horse-artillery on their left, where the strongest attack from the laager near Kimberley was expected. How far the Boers were aware and prepared for the British move was uncertain, but it was decided that at all costs the cavalry would cut through them.

Operations began with the shelling and capture of two laagers on the north side of the river, and the way being thus cleared of the enemy, the division made its way to a point where it was met by the contingent from the Modder River. The force, now increased by Scots Greys, Household Cavalry, and two Lancer Regiments, numbered some 10,000 men, seven batteries of horse-artillery and three field-batteries.

Scarcely had the brigades proceeded before the Boers opened fire, and soon men and gunners fell, and horses riderless and pairs devoid of drivers were seen rushing madly over the plain. From a kopje on the right came the rattle and roar of musketry, which was replied to by the guns of the horse-artillery. There was no doubt now that a horde of Boers were hiding in front, and that the way forward was only to be gained by a desperate plunge. There was no hesitation. General Gordon and his gallant men were ordered to charge and clear the right front, and the thing was done. Away went the 9th and 12th Lancers, galloping for all they were worth, on and on like a flash of avenging lightning. At sight of the human avalanche the Boers, who had been “raining hell” from their trenches, suddenly threw up Mausers and hands; but it was too late, the whirlwind was upon them, and over a hundred Dutchmen bit the dust. Others ran helter-skelter, a whimpering and shouting rabble!

Now came the greatest sight that military men have witnessed for years—the rush of the legions across the great plain of Alexandersfontein. This vast area, about three to five miles square, is surrounded by menacing kopjes, which harboured Boers rendered desperate by surprise and consternation. Across the open the Lancer regiments and Scots Greys as advance guard, with the rest of the force deployed at ten yards' intervals, rushed like a hurricane, a sirocco in the desert. Boers still showered down their lead, but the cavalry, heedless, thundered along, throwing up a volume of dust, while kopje after kopje was swept by the mounted infantry. The enemy was dispersed on every side.

The Transvaal War

Five long miles the race of the centaurs continued—centaurs galloping as if for dear life—Carabineers and Greys leading the main body, the 12th Lancers on the left, the Household Composite Regiment with the 9th Lancers on the right—a regal show, and one worth a lifetime to have witnessed.

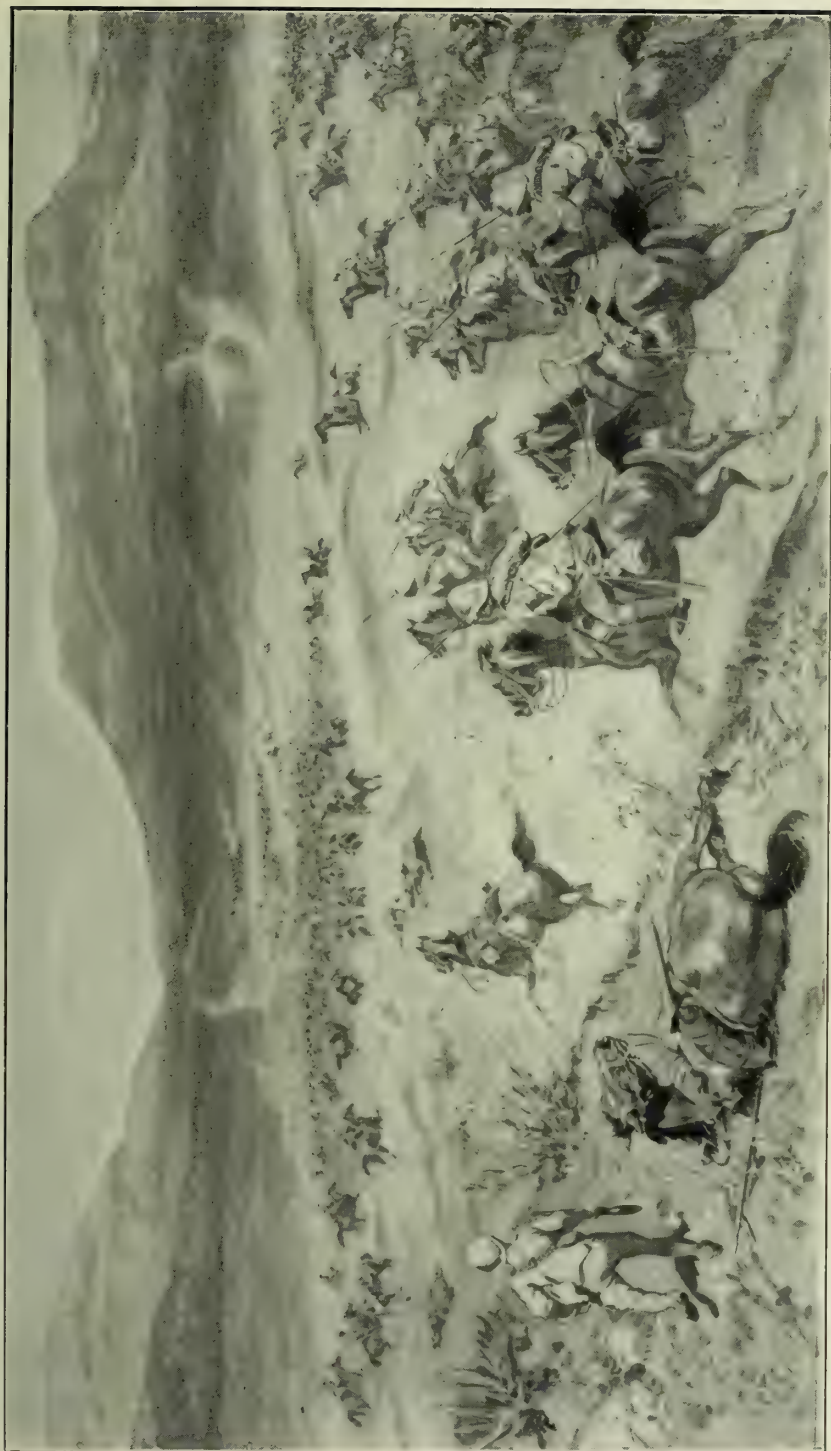
At De Villiers the exhausted warriors watered their horses and strove to gather together the poor brutes for a final effort. Many were sun-stricken, others had simply used themselves up. The speed that was to outwit Cronje had to be paid for in horseflesh. But, owing to that speed, much loss of human life was spared. Lieutenant Sweet Escott (16th Lancers) had fallen early in the



TYPICAL UNDERGROUND DWELLING AT KIMBERLEY.

day, but considering the fire of the enemy it was a marvel that only one officer had been killed. One man was also slain, and there were about thirty wounded.

At two o'clock the troops were halted at the base of a small kopje, from the crown of which it was possible to descry the chimneys of Kimberley in the distance. It was as though they had sighted the Promised Land. Up went a mighty cheer from a thousand throats, ringing almost against the vault of the burnished heaven, and echoing far and wide among the threatening Boer-haunted



10th Lancers.

9th Lancers.

Household Cavalry.

THE LAST STAND MADE BY THE BOERS BEFORE KIMBERLEY—CHARGE OF BRITISH CAVALRY IN
THE ENGAGEMENT AT KLIP DRIFT.

Drawing by W. S. Small, from a Sketch by G. D. Giles, War Artist.

Strategy *Versus* Tactics

kopjes! Kimberley was on the eve of relief. The trial, the trouble, the turmoil were over! The triumph was won! On went the Division, riding now with all their might, and at sight of them the enemy, hot-foot, commenced to gallop into space. Soon the Division was within sight of the suburbs, and their guns were addressing themselves to a Boer laager on the east of the town. The extra uproar struck fresh alarm in the people of Kimberley, who had been driven distraught by the Boer's 100-pounders, and a message was flashed out, "The Boers are shelling the town." Then came the answer—the glorious answer—"It is General French coming to the relief of Kimberley." The news to the imprisoned multitude seemed incredible. They dreaded lest it might be a new wile of the Dutchman, and, to make assurance doubly sure, flashed out a fresh query. But by sunset the British troops had appeared: the whole force, battered, bronzed, but jubilant, was galloping into Beaconsfield.

STRATEGY *VERSUS* TACTICS

Some one has said that strategy is a permanent science whose principles are immutable, while tactics vary with the variations of weapons and modes of warfare. The first example of this permanent science was presented only when Lord Roberts came to South Africa, but so complete and skilful, and withal so subtle, was the initial demonstration, that its fruits within ten days of his arrival at the front were ready to drop to his hand. Looking back, the plan of Lord Roberts' operations appears simple in the extreme, but at the time only masterly conception and accuracy of execution could have ensured success for so complicated a programme. To appreciate its subtlety and its neat execution, it becomes necessary to follow the other portions of the programme, beginning from the entry into the Free State of the enormous army that was massed on its borders by Monday the 12th. On that day three divisions of infantry, the 6th, 7th, and 9th, General French's division, two brigades of mounted infantry under Colonels Hannay and Ridley respectively, the artillery under General Marshall, consisting of three brigade divisions of horse-artillery, two brigade divisions of field-artillery, one howitzer battery, and a Naval Contingent of four 4.7-inch and four 12-pounders, marched from Graspan and Honeynest Kloof through Ramdam. The total field force amounted to 23,000 infantry and 11,000 mounted men, with 98 guns, and a transport of over 700 waggons drawn by nearly 9000 mules and oxen. Later on the artillery was reinforced by the arrival of a battery of 6-inch howitzers, throwing 100-lb. shells, and three Vickers-Maxim quick-firers and the Brigade of Guards, which had remained opposite the Boer trenches at Majorsfontein.

The Transvaal War

The following table serves to show roughly the disposition of the troops :—

FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS' FORCE

FIRST DIVISION.—(Lieutenant-General Lord Methuen).—1st (Pole-Carew's) Brigade—3rd Grenadier Guards; 1st Coldstream Guards; 2nd Coldstream Guards; 1st Scots Guards. 9th (Douglas's) Brigade—1st Northumberland Fusiliers; 1st Loyal North Lancashire (half); 2nd Northamptonshire; 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry; 18th, 62nd, 75th Field Batteries.

SIXTH DIVISION.—(Lieutenant-General Kelly-Kenny).—12th Brigade—2nd Worcestershire, 1st Royal Irish, 2nd Bedfordshire, 2nd Wiltshire (half battalions). 13th Brigade (Knox's)—2nd East Kent; 1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry; 1st West Riding; 2nd Gloucester; 76th, 81st, and 82nd Field Batteries; 38th Company Royal Engineers.

SEVENTH DIVISION.—(Lieutenant-General Tucker).—14th Brigade—2nd Norfolk; 2nd Lincoln; 1st King's Own Scottish Borderers; 2nd Hants. 15th Brigade—2nd Cheshire; 1st East Lancashire; 2nd South Wales Borderers; 2nd North Stafford; 83rd, 84th, and 85th Field Batteries; 9th Company Royal Engineers.

NINTH DIVISION.—(Major-General Sir H. Colville).—3rd (Highland) Brigade (MacDonald's)—1st Argyll and Sutherland; 1st Highland Light Infantry; 2nd Seaforth Highlanders; 2nd Royal Highlanders (Black Watch). 18th Brigade—1st Essex; 1st Yorkshire; 1st Welsh; 2nd Royal Warwick.

CAVALRY DIVISION.—(Major-General (Local Lieutenant-General) French).—1st Brigade (Broadwood)—10th Hussars; 12th Lancers; Household Cavalry. 2nd Brigade (Porter)—6th Dragoon Guards; 6th Dragoons (two squadrons); 2nd Dragoons; New Zealanders; Australians. 3rd Brigade (Gordon)—9th Lancers; 16th Lancers; Horse Artillery; G, P, O, R, Q, T, U Batteries.

TROOPS WITH LORD ROBERTS.—Gordon Highlanders; 2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry; 2nd Shropshire Light Infantry; Canadian Regiment; Roberts' Horse; Kitchener's Horse; City of London Imperial Volunteers (Mounted Infantry Company); 2nd, 38th, 39th, 44th, and 88th Field Batteries; A Battery R.H.A.; 37th and 65th Howitzer Batteries; three Naval 4.7-in. guns; part of Siege Train.

It will be seen by the above that General Colville had been appointed to the command of the Ninth Division, while Colonel Pole-Carew was transferred from the command of the Ninth Brigade to that of the Guards Brigade, and was succeeded in the former post by Colonel Douglas, late Chief of the Staff to Lord Methuen.

Having viewed this force, it becomes somewhat interesting to note how smoothly wheel turned within wheel. The movement began by the concentration of General French's division at Ramdam. On the morning of the 12th the infantry appeared, and General French moved on, crossed Dekiel's Drift on Tuesday the 13th, and captured Klip Drift and Drieput Drift, on the Modder River. Following him closely on the 12th came the divisions of General Tucker and General Kelly-Kenny. The latter division was accompanied by Lord Kitchener and his staff. The negotiation of the first drift, which was

Field-Marshal Lord Roberts' Force

almost impassable for transport, next occupied the ingenuity and tested the perseverance of the troops. The drifts, like the kopjes, are the almost unconquerable bogies of South Africa. They are the natural defences of the country, offering obstruction on every hand, and, however boldly you may storm the kopje, you must with infinite patience negotiate the drift. This is no small undertaking, for drifts, in a way, partake of the paradoxical character of individuals—the weaker the person, the more difficult is he to manage; the more insignificant the river, the greater the perverseness of the drift. It resolves itself in both cases into a question of narrowness. Small streams and small minds are banked up too high to allow moving room in their midst. The result of an attempt to advance is congestion of a painful kind. At this particular drift it was found impossible for the the team of mules to lug the formidable waggon-loads up the north bank, and at last the feat had to be accomplished by adding relays of oxen to assist in the tremendous labour. Finally, by 4 A.M. the next morning the troops got across, General Tucker's division marching to within some three miles of Jacobsdal, and hugging the river all the way, so as to run no risk of being without water. General Kelly-Kenny followed, marching from Waterval Drift to Wegdraai on the morning of the 14th, and proceeding thence at 5 P.M. on the same day to Klip Drift, which was reached in the middle of the night. The rapidity with which this rush on his heels was accomplished enabled General French, who had been awaiting the arrival of the infantry, to proceed on his flying swoop for the relief of Kimberley. This, as we know, was accomplished on Thursday the 15th of February. Meanwhile the wheels of the strategic machinery were going round. A small cavalry patrol had entered Jacobsdal, which town was found to be full of wounded, including many of our own invalids from Rensburg. On the way back the mounted infantry were attacked, and Colonel Henry was fired on by a party of Dutchmen who were concealed in the vicinity of the river, and so sudden was the attack that nine men were wounded. Colonel Henry, Major Hatchell, and ten men were missing. A battery of artillery shelled the environs of the place, and put to flight such Boers as were hanging about, whereupon the British remained masters of the situation. Thus it will be seen that while the Dutchmen were fleeing from Jacobsdal, from Alexandersfontein, and from the neighbourhood of Kimberley, for fear of being cut off, they had surrounding them Lord Methuen at Majersfontein, General Tucker at Jacobsdal, General Kelly-Kenny at the Klip and Rondevaal Drifts, General French on the north, and General Colville wheeling around, ready to suit his movements to any emergency. In this manner Cronje found the teeth of a trap preparing to close on him, and recognised that there was no alternative but to "make a bolt for it."

The Transvaal War

Thus the first part of the programme was accomplished. Kimberley was automatically relieved; Cronje was on the run. But his running was no easy matter. Since Lord Roberts' strategy had come into play, there was a prospect of a neck-and-neck race between the mobile Boer and the mobile Briton, and success depended on General French's ability not only to rout but to head off the retreat of the Dutchman. That the British cavalry commander should outmatch him in celerity was a contingency which had not occurred to Cronje; that he should advance independently of the rail, and start off across the Riet to trek to the Modder, was described by one of his countrymen as distinctly "un-British." Whether this epithet was used to denote admiration or contempt we cannot say. Certain it was that the wily persecutor of Mafeking and Kimberley thought that the secret of the art of trekking was confined to himself and his rabble, until he discovered, too late, that the equally wily French with his disciplined legions was ready to ride over him. On the 16th of February the astonished commandant, with a horde of 10,000 Boers, was scudding in full retreat towards Bloemfontein. On all sides were Boer laagers in a state of abandonment—stores, tents, food, Bibles, raiment—everything had been left by the amazed and panic-stricken Dutchmen. Dronfield, Saltpan, Scholtz Nek, and Spyfontein were now evacuated. Under cover of darkness the investing hordes had taken to their heels, leaving behind them even herds of cattle and ammunition, in their desire to gain a loop-hole of escape. But they soon found that, wherever they might go, there was the rumour of British opposition, an armed and avenging race advancing!

The fact was that the trekking of the Boer hordes had been adroitly discovered by Lord Kitchener, who, having detected an unusual haze of dust in the distance, at once gave orders for the mounted infantry not to follow French, but to pursue the enemy. Accordingly, to quote the *Times* correspondent, who was present:—

"The mounted infantry rode in pursuit across the plain, endeavouring to get to the north of the convoy, while General Knox's Brigade was pushed along the north bank of the river, which makes a large bend to the north between Klip Drift and Klipkraal Drift, to strike the convoy on its southern flank. Cronje sent on his waggons to Drieputs Farm, at the north-eastern end of the bend, where they laagered at about eleven, and maintained a running fight with our troops all day. The skill with which the Boers conducted this rear-guard action extorted unqualified praise from all our officers. As the detachments on the extreme right of the Boer line were driven back by our mounted infantry, they rode round behind their centre and took up fresh positions on their left against the 81st Battery and Knox's Brigade, which were advancing along



CAPTURE OF A BOER CONVOY BY GENERAL FRENCH'S TROOPS NEAR KIMBERLEY.

Drawing by Stanley L. Wood, from a Sketch by an Officer.

Field-Marshal Lord Roberts' Force

the north bank of the river. At midday the Boers attempted to hold three low kopjes two miles north-east of Klip Drift, but were driven back to a stronger position at Drieputs."

Fighting went on throughout the day. At seven o'clock on the evening of the 16th it became almost possible to see the end; the artillery had commenced the vigorous shelling of the laager, and all the divisions moving on the great axis were now aware that Lord Roberts' strategic plan was likely—how soon they knew not—to be crowned with success.

But we must here break off to eulogise the wonderful activity of Kelly-Kenny's division, which acquitted itself so honourably. The march from Graspan to Brandvallei beyond Klip Drift, a distance of $55\frac{1}{4}$ miles, was accomplished in five marching days. The Light Brigade on the eve of the battle of Talavera did sixty-two English miles in twenty-six hours, losing only seventeen stragglers by the way. They accomplished this feat by adopting the peculiar step invented by Sir John Moore, three paces walking alternating with three paces running, which enabled them, when tracks were suitable, to cover six miles an hour! No such evolutions as these were possible, owing to the torrid weather and the necessity to take precautions against exposure in the open veldt during midday. The temperature may be imagined when it is stated that in one day about sixty-six soldiers sun-stricken fell out of the ranks. On the morning of the 12th of February the infantry marched some nine and a half miles from Graspan to Ramdam, and from thence on the 13th moved to Waterval Drift. On the 14th they proceeded to Wegdraai, and on to Klip Drift, which was reached in the small hours of the 15th. Here, notwithstanding their fatigues, the 13th Brigade at once engaged with the enemy's rearguard, and exhibited splendid fighting qualities, which in the circumstances were remarkable even for Englishmen. The West Riding, Gloucesters, Buffs, and Oxforas had a warm time during the whole of the 16th, as the enemy from kopjes beyond the river in the region of Klipkraal assailed them for nearly eight hours, assisted by a pom-pom which caused considerable loss. Though a furious sandstorm later on permitted the Boers under cover of night to get away, abandoning seventy-eight waggons, the next morning the invincible Sixth Division started in pursuit. Captain Trevor (1st East Kent Regiment), Lieutenant Shipway (2nd Gloucester Regiment), and Colonel M'Donnell, R.A., were wounded in the course of the engagement. Major Eveleigh, Oxford Light Infantry, while proceeding to join his battalion in the Sixth Division with a small convoy and escort, was surrounded by a large party of Boers, and after a gallant defence was forced to surrender.

Fighting and marching without ceasing, the infantry went to Brandvallei and thence to Paardeberg, where they arrived at

The Transvaal War

9.30 P.M. on the 17th, in time to take a brief rest prior to the operations which have yet to be described, and in which they took such a prominent part. The marching, considering the tremendous heat and the difficulty of obtaining water, was a feat of which General Kelly-Kenny might justly have felt proud. Though plodding along incessantly through the heavy burning sand under a sun which baked and frizzled even through their uniforms, these men maintained patience and cheerfulness in a rare degree. The whole force was animated by complete faith in their commander, and moved unanimously like some magnificent piece of machinery, scarce taking time to eat or sleep in the zest of their persistent pursuit of the enemy. And they were not alone in their zealous performance of their share in the great scheme. The nicety and precision of the transport arrangements may be imagined when we remember that at one time four divisions were moving independently of their base, making marches across the arid waterless tracks, and carrying with them the necessaries of life for a healthy working multitude. A new regime had begun, and the mobility of our columns had grown equal to that of the Boers, while the railway had been relegated to a subordinate place in the strategical plan.

Colonel Graham, in his "Art of War," declares that "to organise the means of transport for an army acting at a long distance from its principal magazines, in a country where it is entirely dependent on its own supplies, is a problem difficult of solution." Now, the solution of this problem was due to the wonderful talent of Lord Kitchener, who was earning his right to be looked upon as the greatest military organiser of his generation. But his gigantic effort did not increase the popularity of the late Sirdar. He ran counter to too many private interests. The army is too intersected with grooves to be crossed without a few nasty jars, and it was scarcely possible for so young and successful a general and a peer—one possessed of almost criminal good luck and amazing moral as well as physical courage—to be looked upon by his contemporaries-in-arms with excessive approval. The secret of discord was given in a nutshell by Mr. Ralph of the *Daily Mail*. He wrote:—"His first conspicuous act when in South Africa was the withdrawal of the transport service from separated commands in order that it should be managed by the Army Service Corps. Thus it came about that every brigadier and colonel saw a certain amount of his power shifted to what he considered a subordinate branch of the service. A goodish degree of latitude in the enjoyment of comforts and extras, which had been made possible when these officers controlled the waggons, was also curtailed. The army wailed and gnashed its teeth, but I confess I always thought that reason and right were on Lord Kitchener's side in this matter. Lord Kitchener's

Field-Marshal Lord Roberts' Force

plan was the only one by which an insufficient number of waggons and teams could be utilised for all that they were worth."

The mobility of an army depends on the reduction of transport, and to the task of organising transport sufficient to ensure the mobility of 100,000 men the hero of Omdurman applied himself with his customary thoroughness. He conceived the gigantic ambition of doing away with all distinctions of transport, regimental, departmental, ammunition, or ambulance, and merging them in an immense whole, thus creating a single general corps, and it was doubtless to this conception and the able way that the scheme—with the assistance of Colonel Richardson—was carried out, that Lord Roberts owed the expedition of his march to Bloemfontein and the further success which resulted from his sure and swift rushes onward. Ordinarily speaking, in the army each unit is allowed its own transport. For instance, colonel, adjutant, and orderly-room are allotted by regulation a tent apiece. Every three officers share a tent, every fourteen men another. Staff-sergeants, batmen, and other details are proportionately provided for. Mounted officers are allowed 80 lbs. baggage, double the amount allowed for "smaller fry." Without going into minute particulars, we may reckon that a brigade would move with 70 waggons and a division with about 180. To reduce the huge encumbrance of say some 2000 waggons, with their complement of oxen and drivers, was a stupendous labour, from which, with its consequences, this military Hercules did not shrink. Each unit was taken in hand, and its excrescences—regulation excrescences, we may call them—were cut down, peeled of all superfluities, much to the disgust of the staff officers and various other personages who stickle for their rights, and resent any innovation that threatens to dock off an iota of the creature comforts that belong to them by the divine right of red-tape and red-book regulations.

Not only were the rules of transport revised, but special hints tending to the development of the initiative of the private soldier were issued to the troops. Herewith is appended the notable document which may be said to have marked the beginning of the new era:—

CAPE TOWN, *February 5, 1900.*

The following notes by the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief are communicated for the guidance of all concerned.—By order,

KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM, *Chief of Staff.*

NOTES FOR GUIDANCE IN SOUTH AFRICAN WARFARE

Cavalry

1. On reconnaissances or patrols not likely to be prolonged beyond one day, the cavalry soldier's equipment should be lightened as much as possible, nothing being taken that can possibly be dispensed with.

The Transvaal War

2. It has been brought to my notice that our cavalry move too slowly when on reconnaissance duty, and that unnecessary long halts are made, the result being that the enemy, although starting after the cavalry, are able to get ahead of it. I could understand this if the country were close and difficult, but between the Modder and the Orange Rivers its general features are such as to admit of small parties of cavalry, accompanied by field-guns, being employed with impunity.

Artillery

3. If the enemy's guns have, in some instances, the advantage of ours in range, we have the advantage of theirs in mobility, and we should make use of them by not remaining in position the precise distance of which from the enemy's batteries has evidently been fixed beforehand. Moreover, it has been proved that the Boers' fire is far less accurate at unknown distances. In taking up positions, compact battery formations should be avoided, the guns should be opened out, or it may be desirable to advance by sections or batteries. Similarly retirements should be carried out, at considerably increased intervals, by alternate batteries or sections, if necessary, and care should be taken to travel quickly through the dangerous zone of hostile artillery fire.

The following plan, frequently adopted by the Boers, has succeeded in deceiving our artillery on several occasions.

Suppose A to be a gun emplacement, the gun firing smokeless powder. Simultaneously with the discharge of the gun at A a powder flash of black powder will be exploded at B, a hill in rear, leading us to direct our projectile on B. Careful calculation with a watch, however, will defeat this plan.

Infantry

4. The present open formation renders it difficult for officers to exercise command over their men, except such as may be in their immediate vicinity. A remedy for this would appear to be a system of whistle calls, by which a company lying in extended order could obey orders as readily as if in quarter column. I invite suggestions for such a system of whistle calls as would be useful.

5. It is difficult to recognise officers as equipped at present, and it seems desirable they should wear a distinguishing mark of some kind, either on the collar at the back of the neck or on the back of the coat.

6. Soldiers, when under fire, do not take sufficient advantage of the sandy nature of the soil to construct cover for themselves. If such soil is scraped, even with a canteen tin, a certain amount of cover from rifle fire can be obtained in a short time.

7. The distribution of ammunition to the firing line is one of the most difficult problems of modern warfare. One solution, which has been suggested to me, is for a portion of the supports gradually to creep forward until a regular chain of men is established from the supports (where the ammunition carts should be) right up to the firing line. The ammunition could then be gradually worked up by hand till it reached the firing line, where it could be passed along as required. This would, no doubt, be a slow method of distributing ammunition, but it appears to be an improvement on the present method, which is almost impossible to carry out under fire.

8. Reports received suggest that the Boers are less likely to hold entrenchments on the plain with the same tenacity and courage as they display when defending kopjes, and it is stated that this applies especially to night-time, if

Field-Marshal Lord Roberts' Force

food against a large force of Boers. They (E Squadron) occupied an old farmhouse. They loopholed the walls, and although continuously harassed by the Boer fire, they managed to maintain their position and the post they were placed in charge of. During that time they had to subsist on water only, and that brackish. Their horses were dying daily, as there was not a blade of grass on the veldt, and the stench was abominable. On the third day of the siege a poor goat that had wandered near the besieged was immediately captured and devoured. On the fourth day they commandeered one of the enemy's horses, which they intended to slaughter, their own being too emaciated for that purpose. But the Boers, having been reinforced, gave them no time to do the butchering. On the evening of the fourth day a messenger bearing a letter from General de Wet arrived, demanding surrender within ten minutes. The Boer force consisted of 500 men and two 12-pounders. The officers consulted together, and decided, in view of the hopeless condition of their little garrison of fifty all told, worn out and starving and their horses dead, to accept the inevitable.

While all this was going on, and Cronje was making the discovery that he might be completely outflanked, and that the position of the Boer army at Spyfontein must become untenable, Lord Roberts was entering into Jacobsdal. The place was orderly and quiet. The three churches were full of patients, the town having been used mainly as an hospital. The invalids, for the most part, were sufferers from enteric, the result of too much Modder River. After a long and painful intimacy with the grilling veldt, the sight of houses and civilised dwellings struck gratefully on the eyes of the incoming troops. A store was hailed as a veritable godsend. Some one bought a tin of oatmeal, and walked off with it as one who had secured a prize; some one else gave a goodly price for a pot of pickles, and came away licking his lips like a modern Eliogabalus. The rejoicing was no mean emotion, for the unfortunate men, with the appetites of athletes, had been existing on lovers' fare. One of the famished but cheery fellows wrote: "We marched into Jacobsdal, and as soon as we arrived we thronged the stores for provisions. I made the following purchases for three of us:—

	s.	d.
Three two-pound loaves at 1s. each	3	0
Three tins of condensed milk at 1s. each	3	0
Two tins of syrup at 1s. 3d. each	2	6
One small packet of cocoa	0	9
One tin of Quaker oats	1	3
One pound of sugar	0	6
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	11	0

The Transvaal War

Then we gorged ourselves to make up for three weeks' semi-starvation. The most prominent building of Jacobsdal is the church, which stands in the centre of the town. The town itself lies in a hollow—Sleepy Hollow would be an apt title for the place just now. Most of the houses, including the church, are at present converted into hospitals, and the female population are acting as nurses. Most of them are in mourning for relatives lost during the campaign." Later, the troops moved on and encamped at a farm which had also been used as an hospital. Sights pathetic were only too common—our own sick and wounded in various stages of suffering, and outside, to use a "Tommy's" description, "some poor devils wrapped in sheets ready to be put to bed for the last time!"

Lord Roberts visited the large German hospital, and expressed himself well pleased with the splendid cleanliness of the place and the general evidences of good management. Among the sufferers was found Colonel Henry, who had been taken prisoner on the 14th. Strangely enough, all the inhabitants of the place evinced satisfaction at the arrival of the British, particularly on making the discovery that it was not the habit of the British troops to loot and destroy, as they had been led by the Burghers to believe was the case. They were now made acquainted with the proclamation which Lord Roberts issued to the Burghers of the Orange Free State when his force invaded their territory. It was printed both in English and Dutch:—

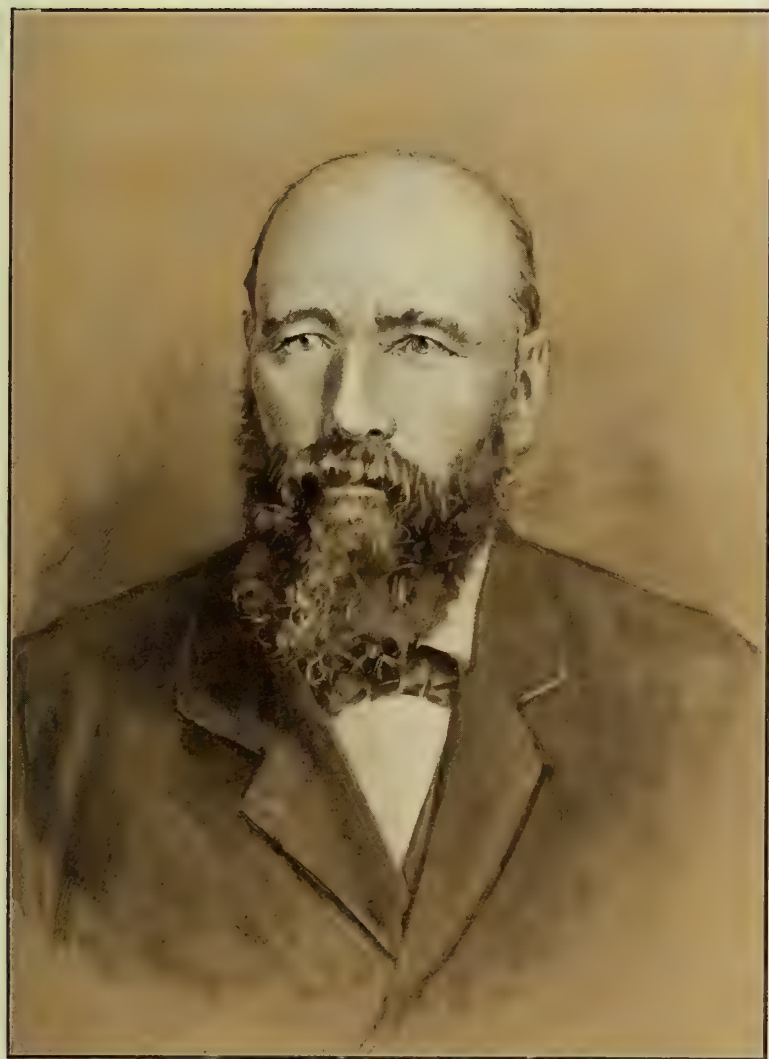
"The British troops under my command having entered the Orange Free State, I feel it my duty to make known to all Burghers the cause of our coming, as well as to do all in my power to put an end to the devastation caused by this war, so that, should they continue the war, the inhabitants of the Orange Free State may not do so ignorantly, but with full knowledge of their responsibility before God for the lives lost in the campaign.

"Before the war began the British Government, which had always desired and cultivated peace and friendship with the people of the Orange Free State, gave a solemn assurance to President Steyn that, if the Orange Free State remained neutral, its territory would not be invaded, and its independence would be at all times fully respected by Her Majesty's Government.

"In spite of that declaration, the Government of the Orange Free State was guilty of a wanton and unjustifiable invasion of British territory.

"The British Government believes that this act of aggression was not committed with the general approval and free will of a people with whom it has lived in complete amity for so many years. It believes that the responsibility rests wholly with the Government of the Orange Free State, acting, not in the interests of the country, but under mischievous influences from without. The British Government, therefore, wishes the people of the Orange Free State to understand that it bears them no ill-will, and, so far as is compatible with the successful conduct of the war and the re-establishment of peace in South Africa, it is anxious to preserve them from the evils brought upon them by the wrongful action of their Government.

"I therefore warn all Burghers to desist from any further hostility towards



GENERAL CRONJE.

From a Photo by M. Plumbé.

The Herding of Cronje

Her Majesty's Government and the troops under my command, and I undertake that any of them who may so desist, and who are found staying in their homes and quietly pursuing their ordinary occupations, will not be made to suffer in their persons or property on account of their having taken up arms in obedience to the order of their Government. Those, however, who oppose the forces under my command, or furnish the enemy with supplies or information, will be dealt with according to the customs of war.

"Requisitions for food, forage, fuel, or shelter made on the authority of the officers in command of Her Majesty's troops, must be at once complied with; but everything will be paid for on the spot, prices being regulated by the local market rates. If the inhabitants of any district refuse to comply with the demands made on them, the supplies will be taken by force, a full receipt being given.

"Should any inhabitant of the country consider that he or any member of his household has been unjustly treated by any officer, soldier, or civilian attached to the British army, he should submit his complaint, either personally or in writing, to my headquarters or to the headquarters of the nearest general officer. Should the complaint on inquiry be substantiated, redress will be given.

"Orders have been issued by me prohibiting soldiers from entering private houses or molesting the civil population on any pretext whatever, and every precaution has been taken against injury to property on the part of any person belonging to or connected with the army.

"ROBERTS, *Field-Marshal, Commanding-in-Chief, South Africa.*"

THE HERDING OF CRONJE

To return to General French. The cavalry division bivouacked outside the town of Kimberley, but their repose was limited. At 3 A.M. on the morning of the 16th they were up and doing. The enemy in the north was giving trouble. Some sharp fighting took place, during which Lieutenants Brassey (9th Lancers) and P. Bunbury were killed. This early activity was tough work for the already weary troops, who had been fifteen hours without a meal. Indeed, it was generally remarked that the relievers looked sorrier specimens of humanity than the relieved. The Colonial troops, the Queensland and New Zealand Contingents, and the New South Wales Lancers, considering all things, were wonderfully fit after having played a conspicuous part in the operations. These troops had joined General French's column from the regions of the Orange and Modder Rivers. The New South Wales Lancers rode on the extreme right flank of the first brigade, and their ambulance corps, under Lieutenant Edwards, kept up with the column, and was complimented on being the first ambulance to cross the Modder River. Like the rest of the troops, they had taken their share of small rations, merely nominal rest, sun-scorching, and maddening thirst, and yet were full of zeal—"keen as mustard," as some one said—to engage in the herding of Cronje and effect his capture.

The Transvaal War

Worn out as they were, they had sprung to attention on a rumour brought in by a despatch-rider to the effect that Cronje had evacuated Majersfontein and was in full retreat.

At midnight on the 16th, no confirmation of this news had been received. The jaded troops, and still more jaded horses—mere skeletons in horse's skins—were preparing for real repose, when all was changed! A telegram arrived from Lord Kitchener saying that Cronje, with 10,000 men, was in full retreat from Majersfontein, with all his waggons and equipment and four guns, along the north bank of the Modder River towards Bloemfontein; that he had already fought a rearguard action with him; and that if French, with all available horses and guns, could head him and prevent his crossing the river, the infantry from Klip Drift would press on and annihilate or take the whole force prisoners.

Here was a surprise! Pleasant yet unpleasant, for shattered men in the last stage of fatigue. But General French—whom some one has described as possessing the shape of a brick, with all the solid and excellent qualities of one—rose to the occasion. He was on the point of going to sleep, but there was no thought of rest now. Arrangements had to be made, horses weeded—out of a division of 5000 only one brigade was fit to move!—more borrowed from the Kimberley Light Horse, whose holiday-time had come, and other preparations hurriedly set on foot to ensure an immediate rush—a swoop that should be as swift and successful as it was startling!

One may imagine the midnight picture. The dark immensity of veldt—the dust-driven, sweltering veldt—and Cronje, miles ahead with his horde, the remnant of his convoy, his women and children, fleeing along the north bank of the Modder, harassed by the Sixth Division, threatened by the Seventh and Ninth, and yet longing to cross the river, to get safely to Koodoosrand Drift, where he hourly expected reinforcements would come to his succour. French, dead beat after glorious work accomplished, rising from the first hospitable pillow he had seen for days—springing suddenly to action, ordering, organising, deciding how to effect the great swoop on Koodoosrand Drift and head off the fugitive. There was no time for the buckling on of mental and moral armour; only the warrior at soul could have been ready for such a situation. But such an one was here. He gave swift orders. In three hours' time General Broadwood and his brigade and three batteries of artillery—the only ones available out of seven—sallied forth towards the east, in the dusk of the morning. Their destination—Koodoosrand Drift—was some forty miles off, and once here Cronje's last loophole of escape would be gone! The General and his staff followed at 4.15 A.M., riding at full speed, and catching up the brigade about fifteen miles off.

The Herding of Cronje

The whole nature of their errand and the proposed movement was a surprise, for this manœuvre had not entered into General French's original calculations.

When the General had seen the Sixth Division safely at Klip Drift and secured his left flank, he proceeded on his rush to Kimberley. Of other movements save his own he was ignorant. Even as he and the troops were riding into the town, Cronje, who had discovered the futility of his position at Majersfontein and the danger of it, was trekking madly across the front of the Sixth Division. On the morning of the 16th Lord Kitchener, hearing that the Majersfontein laager and the Modder River camp were deserted, and seeing a cloud of dust in the distance, had guessed what was happening, and immediately altered his plans to meet the emergency. As we are aware, he instantly gave orders for the mounted infantry not to follow French, but to pursue and attack the Boer convoy, while he telegraphed later to French, with the results just described. General French grasped the position at a glance. He knew no time was to be lost, and soon Broadwood's brigade, with horses that could barely move, was pushing on as fast as spurs could insist. The early morning dusk broke into the green and grey and gold of dawn; birds flew frightened hither and thither; foxes rushed to their holes; springbok and hares tempted the sportsmen, but never a glance to right or left was wasted. All eyes were strained to the east, to the momentous east, and the wooded banks of the distant river. Nearer and ever nearer they came—specks were seen on the horizon—men?—horses?—the enemy moving?—scudding away before he could be cornered? No—Yes? A moment of excitement, anguish—joy! The General had mounted a kopje, reconnoitred, and discovered the truth. It was Cronje's force—the remnants of his convoy some 4000 yards off—the convoy streaming down into the drifts that lead to Petrusberg and thence to Bloemfontein! They must never reach that destination! Kitchener's words—"Head him and prevent his crossing the river"—so simple in sound, so complex in execution, thrilled every heart. Quickly the guns were got into action—grandly—almost magically—the first shot plumped—bang! in front of the leading waggon just as the convoy was preparing to descend the drift! What a reveillé! Cronje, as we know, was rushing from the clutches of the Sixth Division at Drieput. Breathless, he gathered himself together. Suddenly he found himself assailed by a new force—a new terror! He divined in a moment what had happened. It was French, the ubiquitous French—French redivivus, as it were—who was putting the finishing touch to the chapter of disaster. Poor Captain Boyle, in his letter to the *Nineteenth Century*, thus described the great Dutchman's plight:—

The Transvaal War

"His only chance now was to sacrifice his guns and convoy, and cut his way across the river under the heavy fire of our guns. Immediately on the first shell bursting in the laager, about thirty Boers galloped out to seize a kopje on our right, afterwards called Roberts' Hill; but the 10th Hussars in a neck-and-neck race had the legs of them, and seizing the hill in advance, beat them off with their carbine and Maxim fire. The Boers from their laager answered our shell fire for a short time with great accuracy from two or three guns. But these were quickly silenced, and shell after shell from Artillery Hill fell plump into the laager. Finally, our second battery was moved to a little distance from Roberts' Hill and opened fire from the southern slope on to a kopje to which the Boers had retired. All that afternoon at intervals our guns poured shells into the laager, but no response came, and we spent our time watching the Boers, now 3000 yards away, entrenching themselves in the open and along the river-bank. Their waggons caught fire and the ammunition exploded, and as they realised their position more and more, so must their hearts have sunk. Anxiously must they have waited for the first sign of the infantry gathering round, as anxiously as we did in our turn watching from the high kopjes.

"The cavalry, worn out as they were and without food, had to hold the kopjes and water their horses in turn some five miles off. They got what grazing they could in the kopjes as they lay there, for no corn had come on from Kimberley, and neither men nor horses had had any food except the three days' rations with which they originally started from Klip Drift the Thursday before, a good deal of which had been shaken off the saddles or lost in the long gallop up the plain to Kimberley. The General, the men, the horses, all alike had to live on what was found at Kamilfontein—a few mealies, a few onions, and the crumbs of biscuits in our pockets were all we had until some Free Staters' sheep and cattle were rounded and killed. Had it not been for this plentiful supply of meat, the men must have fared very badly for the next three days. No transport came in until Monday night, and the horses had but 1½ lb. of corn in three days. The men were put on half rations of biscuits even after the transport arrived.

"Meanwhile, on Saturday afternoon about 5 P.M. Broadwood sent word to French that in the far distance he observed the dust rising, which he took for Kelly-Kenny's division. French returned to Roberts' Hill, and, until the sun set, anxiously awaited the arrival of the infantry—but they marched but slowly. From 6 P.M. till 7 P.M. we opened fire again from our batteries to show Lord Kitchener our exact positions." The splendid work done by the Royal Horse Artillery was described by another eye-witness. He said: "I will give you an idea of what good gunners we have in the Artillery.

The Herding of Cronje

General French said to one of the gunners, 'See those three waggons over there? (a distance of about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles); see what you can do with them.' The gunner fired three shell, and the waggons were no more."

We must now watch the progress of the other portions of the force who were actively engaged in taking their share in the huge undertaking. Colonel Stephenson's brigade, on the night of the 16th (while General French was learning the great news), had re-crossed the river at Klip Drift, and on the morning of the 17th (at the same hour as Broadwood's brigade was moving from Kimberley) had marched to the south of the river with the same intention—that of heading off Cronje at Paardeberg and Koodoosrand Drift. Thus, with Broadwood's brigade on one side, and Stephenson's on the other, Cronje's prospects of escape were scarcely worth a dime. The *Times*' correspondent, talking of Colonel Stephenson's troops on the morning of the fateful 17th, said:—

"They were joined about ten at Klipkraal Drift by Knox's brigade, which marched along the northern bank. The mounted infantry, pushing on, reached Paardeberg Drift that evening, and encamped on rising ground close to the south bank. The infantry, leaving Klipkraal at six in the evening, made a night march for Paardeberg Drift, but, missing their way, slightly passed the Drift and bivouacked on some rising ground nearly two miles beyond, separated from the river by a smooth plain shelving gently down to it. The mistake was a fortunate one, as it brought the infantry almost opposite to the place where Cronje had determined to cross. Cronje had left Drieputs during the night after the battle, abandoning seventy-eight waggons, and pushed on along the north bank of the river during Saturday for Koodoosrand Drift. Soon after passing north of Paardeberg Drift he heard that French had already returned from Kimberley, and was holding a line of high kopjes running north-west from Koodoosrand Drift, and completely commanding the drift. Wheeling his waggons to the right across the plain, he laagered on the north bank of the river at Wolveskraal Farm. This was opposite to a drift of the same name, about half-way between Paardeberg and Koodoosrand Drifts, being about four miles in a straight line from each. Here he intended to cross on Sunday morning. But already, during the night, he became aware of the presence of the mounted infantry south of Paardeberg Drift, and decided that he could not get his convoy away without fighting. Probably Cronje did not realise that Kelly-Kenny's infantry could have already marched up and occupied the rising ground not three thousand yards south of Wolveskraal Drift; still less could he know that General Colville's division (whose endurance had been extraordinary) was but a few miles behind, and was

The Transvaal War

to reach Paardeberg Drift before daybreak. If Cronje had known this, there is little doubt that he would have promptly sacrificed all his transport and all his guns in order to get his men away and escape from the trap into which he was now caught. As it was, he sent a great part of his force to line the river-bed all the way down to Paardeberg Drift, in order to act as a rear-guard and check any attempt to interfere with his crossing Wolveskraal Drift at his leisure."

Later on, the Ninth Division, with the Highland Brigade, who had made a forced march from Jacobsdal, arrived on the scene just in time to see the Boers sending up rockets to show their position to expected reinforcements. And there is little doubt that Cronje, unable to realise the expeditious advance of "lumbering Britons," mistook General Colville's troops for the longed-for relief.

Among the missing from near Paardeberg were Lieutenants Romilly (Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry) and Metge (Welsh Regiment), and Captains Arnold and Vaughan of Kitchener's Horse.

Here we have the position of affairs as they stood on the night of the 17th and on the morning of the 18th, when the trap so ingeniously set for Cronje commenced to close little by little—north, south, east, and west. Everywhere he turned the detestable rooineks menaced him, and he who so lately had eaten his breakfast to the tune of his 100-pounder gun, that belched ruin and mutilation over the whole region of Kimberley, was now constrained to breakfast to a new and disagreeable inversion of an identical melody!

THE BATTLE OF PAARDEBERG

On Sunday, the 18th of February, the most exciting action of the war took place. It was costly as it was momentous, for it served to decide the fate of the fleeing Dutchman. The scene of the drama was not unpicturesque. From the Paardeberg to the Koodoosrand Drift the Modder flowed along a deep hollow from thirty to a hundred yards in depth. To either side the forks of small dongas radiated, while the high banks were fringed with the feathery foliage of the mimosa and willow. Donga and tree stump afforded excellent cover for the slim adversary, sniper or scout. The river travelled from Koodoosrand Drift west-south-west, deviating southwards on either side of the Wolveskraal Drift. A vast expanse of veldt, some two thousand yards wide, shelved down towards the south bank of the river, fringed by higher ground; and this grassy plain extending eastwards joined a circle of kopjes now known as Kitchener's Hill. On the opposite, the north bank of the river, was another similar plain, dotted with minor kopjes to within a thousand yards of the river, and beyond them was the higher hump of Paardeberg Hill.

The Battle of Paardeberg

The action began at dawn. Firing grew hotter and hotter with the growth of the morning, and soon pandemonium was let loose. While part of the mounted infantry was forcing the rearguard up the river another part was manœuvring on the right front and flank of the enemy. The Dutchmen meanwhile from King's Kop turned on a quick-firing Hotchkiss gun, which swept the flat country from the kop to the southern bank of the river. The antagonists had both posted themselves on the north bank of the river—both banks of which were level, and this expanse afforded no cover for movements. Over this expanse the Ninth Brigade had to move, struggling through a zone of fire towards the concealed enemy.

Cronje by this time had realised that his position was critical—almost hopeless. Bringing his fine military qualities to bear on the situation, he decided to make the best of a bad job, and entrench himself with all the skill possible. He held about one square mile of the river-bed on either side of Wolfeskraal Drift, and beyond that he knew were encircling kopjes, each one concealing its multitude of rooineks. On the east, slowly creeping up, were the menacing numbers of Tucker's Division; on the west the vast crowds of the mounted infantry and the Sixth Division; on the south were field-guns little more than a mile off, threatening to shower destruction from Gun Hill, while on the north were Naval guns and howitzers. Indeed, everywhere was fate frowning, obdurate, vengeful. But the Dutchman retained his pluck and his wits. He even believed that with everything against him he might yet employ the same tactics which had nonplussed Lord Methuen at Modder River. He still retained a poor opinion of his adversary, and his delusion lent him confidence. He hurriedly built trenches, that in themselves were masterpieces of defensive art, and took up his headquarters in the centre, in a red brick house—a species of travellers' hostelry, which may be found near all drifts in South Africa. Here at night Mrs. Cronje joined him. During the day she was placed in the women's shelter at the east side of the area, which shelter was protected by waggons and trenches all along the bed of the river. Talking of these trenches, the correspondent of the *Times* declared that "the skill with which they were constructed as defences against both rifle and shell fire was worthy of the highest praise. All except those of the outer lines of pickets were made so narrow and deep that it seems as though they were in many cases entered from one end rather than the top, as any such ingress must even in a week's time have considerably widened the neck of the excavation. At the top they were perhaps eighteen inches wide, at the bottom about three feet, and by crouching down the most complete protection was afforded from bursting shell.

"Every natural protection, such as the ramifications of the dongas

The Transvaal War

which eat into the banks on both sides of the river, had been utilised, though the bombardment from both sides compelled them to abandon their first hasty breastworks cut into the actual top of the bank, which was here from about fifty to a hundred yards from the river itself, and thirty feet in height.

"For the first time here the 'T' trenches, of which much has been said during the present campaign, were used. They did not seem to present the least advantage over the ordinary shapes, except that in an exposed angle they may have provided additional protection against an enfilading fire."

Cronje's first object in entrenching himself in the bed of the river was to arrest the further advance of the mounted infantry, who had taken possession of the bed of the river west of his position. In this he was successful. Worn, harassed, and almost helpless, he determined to make a desperate stand, hoping against hope to gain time till some help from without should arrive. But this help never reached him. A grand enveloping movement commenced, and Cronje, brought to bay, found himself face to face with what proved to be his Sedan.

By this time he and his followers were snugly ensconced in bush and donga and scrub round the laager, and from the trees around they vigorously sniped and poured volleys at the advancing troops. In the advance to the attack the Highland Brigade was on the left, General Knox's brigade in the centre and on the right, while General Smith Dorrien's brigade, after crossing the river by Paardeberg Drift, moved along the north bank. The Highland Brigade had a terrific duty. The Boers, from their position in the bed of the river and on both sides of it, commanded the left of the Brigade, and as the kilted mass moved forward in the open poured upon them a deadly fire, which forced them to lie prone for the rest of the day. Here at noon, when bullets were humming their loudest, General Hector Macdonald was wounded. He had dismounted, and was directing the movements of the brigade, when overtaken by a shot which penetrated thigh and foot. Despite this unlucky accident and a tremendous spell of hard fighting, the brigade exhibited splendid pluck and tenacity. They were destitute of cover, but maintained their position with astonishing fortitude, and this after the long forced march they had made from Jacobsdal, and while enduring the tortures of maddening thirst, which could not be assuaged. A heavy thunderstorm mercifully overtook them in the course of the afternoon and raindrops large as gooseberries clattered down their relieving moisture on the parched and exhausted troops.

On the north bank of the river was Cronje's laager, an environment of waggons, carts, ammunition, and stores. While General Smith Dorrien's force, among which were the Canadians, Gordons,



9th Division.

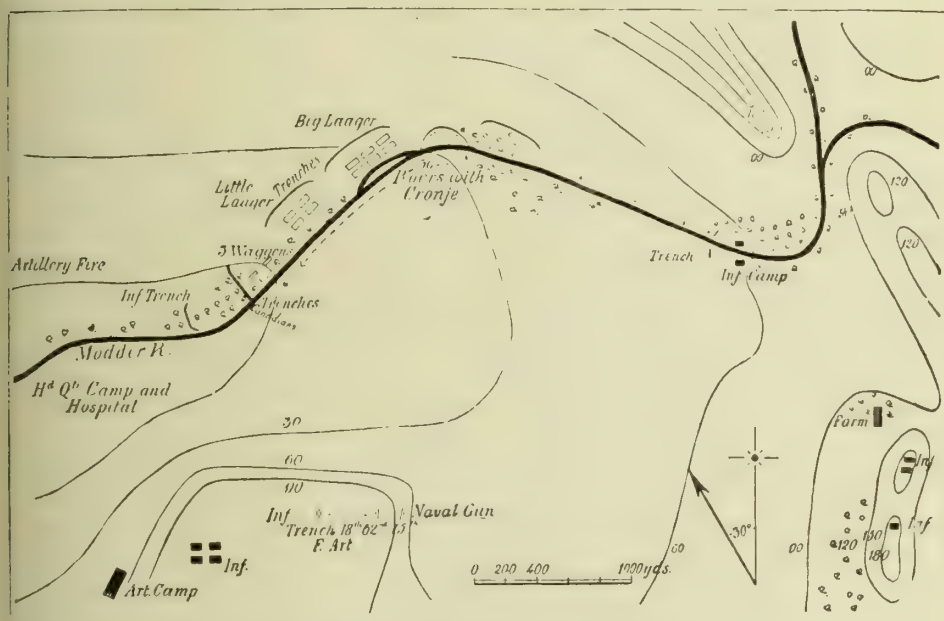
THE BATTLE OF PAARDEBERG.

Drawing by Sidney Paget from a Sketch by W. B. Wollen, R.I.

The Battle of Paardeberg

and Shropshires, attempted to charge into the laager, they too were vigorously shelled by the enemy, who, undefeatable, held on valiantly to a kopje on the south bank of the river. Here they posted a Vickers-Maxim and other deadly weapons, and in a measure divided our force in two. The Seaforths and the Cornwall Regiment made a splendid charge with the bayonet, and drove the Boers from their cover round the drift, but in the glorious rush both the Colonel and Adjutant of the Cornwalls were stricken down. Ninety-six of the men were wounded, but they now held the north-west side of the enemy's position.

On the east the Sixth Division was hard at work tackling a horde of Boers, who made a last despairing lunge in order to burst



PLAN OF THE BOER LAAGERS AND TRENCHES AND THE BRITISH POSITIONS AT PAARDEBERG.
(By an Officer of the Royal Field Artillery.)

through the entangling forces and push for the south bank of the river. The effort was stubborn as it was desperate, but they were defeated by the dash of the West Riding Regiment, who pressed forward with the bayonet and succeeded in seizing the drift. Many splendid fellows were wounded and slain in the collision. Meanwhile the artillery continued to direct their incessant thunder against the laager, pouring in a deluge of destruction from all quarters, and forcing the Dutchmen to shrink within the space, little more than a mile square, into which they had so hurriedly scrambled.

The Transvaal War

General Kelly-Kenny having possessed himself of both Klip Drift and Koodoosrand Drift, the Boers were now enclosed east and west. But here, crunched in a veritable death-trap, they fought tenaciously. Worn, harassed, and weakened by their hurried march, they yet held a stubborn front to our assaulting troops, and from the cramped region of their laager did as much damage as it was possible to do. The Canadians, who had behaved with conspicuous gallantry in the attack on the laager, lost nineteen killed and sixty-three wounded. A description of the fight as seen from their point of view was given by a private in the 1st Contingent:—

“We left Klip Drift on the Modder River at 6 P.M. Saturday, and marched all night until seven on Sunday morning, covering 23 miles. During the march we could hear the guns ahead. I was orderly man for Sunday, so, removing my pack, I went to the river for water. Just a little way up the river a brisk fire opened up. When I got back to our lines I found them issuing a ration of rum. I had mine, and it just braced me up.

“By this time the engagement was pretty brisk. Our brigade was ordered on the left of the river, which we crossed at a ford just in rear of the camp. The Shropshires crossed first, then followed the Canadians and Gordons. The water was up to our necks. Some went deeper and had to swim. We crossed in fours, holding on to each other, formed up in column and advanced a short distance, when we extended to seven paces in skirmishing order. C Company formed to support A Company.

“By this time the bullets were coming pretty thickly, and we had some very narrow squeaks. We reinforced A Company at 500 yards and opened fire. The Boer fire was heavy, and some of our boys had been hit, but we soon subdued the fire. Their position was in the river, and we were lying out in the open, no cover of any kind except a few anthills. We could see very little to fire at except the fire from their guns. Our line was in a crescent shape, the right on the river, and the left extended along about 500 yards. In the afternoon our troops were ordered to cease fire. As soon as we stopped they started sniping, which made us hug the ground.

“Shortly after joining the firing line Captain Arnold of A Company was struck. The Boers started a murderous fire on the stretcher-bearers who carried him away, a trick they did all day long. Towards evening the left was ordered to reinforce the right. It was a daring move, but we did it by running down in threes and fours. At dark all the forces retired, and quite a few men volunteered to search for the wounded. I was out all night until four the next morning, when I laid down played out. I never want to witness such terrible sights as I saw that night again. Whenever we showed ourselves in the moonlight the sharpshooters would fire at us. We were all up early next morning, but the Boers had retired farther up the river. So we collected our wounded and buried the dead. I was helping a hospital sergeant, and he sent two of us up the river to search for wounded. We found a few, and also came across a wounded Boer, whom we bandaged and took back to camp. We also came across a few dead. We questioned the Boer, and he said that they had retired during the night, carrying their wounded and throwing the dead into the river. After dinner, which we had about four, we went out on outpost duty. During the night there was quite a little firing going on. This morning we advanced towards the position again, and about

The Battle of Paardeberg

ten o'clock retired for some breakfast and advanced again. Although under fire all day we did not fire, but the artillery certainly played Cain with them."

Captain Arnold's wound was mortal, but Lieutenant Mason, who was also shot, was not dangerously hurt.

A Colonial, writing from the front at Paardeberg, said that fighting "went on during the day until about five o'clock, when the Cornwalls arrived in support. The officer commanding this battalion seemed to think that too much time had already been spent in fighting the Boers, so ordered the charge. The result was fatal to the Cornwalls, as they had to retire. The Canadians, acting under the orders of the commanding officer of the Cornwalls as senior officer, also charged, and with a like result; but the Canadians, in place of retiring, simply lay down and remained. It was during this charge that most of the fatalities occurred. The unfortunate commanding officer of the Cornwalls was killed, and Captain Arnold and Lieutenant Mason of the Canadians wounded. The Brigadier subsequently expressed his regret that the charge took place, but at the same time warmly congratulated the Canadians on their behaviour, as did Lord Roberts also."

Of gallantry and daring there was no end. From dawn till sunset raged a battle of appalling fierceness, of magnificent persistency. From drift to drift the hollows reverberated with the perpetual roll of musketry, the brawling of multifarious guns, the hoarse cheers of charging troops, the shouts of the unflinching enemy. Curling smoke burst in wreaths and garlands from the sides of the hills and rose against the purple of thunder-clouds; flaring tongues of vengeful flame danced and forked their reflections of heaven's lightnings; spouts and torrents of water poured from the sky, mingling with the heroic blood of Britain's best, that trickled in rivelets, north, south, east, and west of the scene, and traced far and wide the history of sacrifice on the now sacred ground. For all this, the position of the contending parties remained unchanged—Cronje defiant and enclosed, the British lion crouching, watching.

At dusk the scene was weirdly, terrifically picturesque. From the south and north sides of the river shells hurtled through the air, falling and exploding along the river-bed, now setting fire to a waggon, now a cart, and filling the gloom with lurid panoramas of flame and an awe-striking, ceaseless din. Once an ammunition waggon was struck. Then the blaze and crackling which followed, intermingling as they did with the roar of artillery and the rattle of rifles, made a fitting concert for Hades. And to the tune of this demoniacal intermezzo the cordon round the enemy was gradually closing, his last chances of escape were one by one being sealed, the last links in Lord Roberts' strategical chain were being forged.

The Transvaal War

At night there was peace. The Modder might have been the placid purling Thames winding along between fringed and sloping banks to the bosom of the sea. But there was none to admire the pretty scene. All were worn out, and glad to drop to sleep where they had fought, while the bearer-parties—"body-snatchers," as they were jocosely styled—picked their way in the darkness, doing their deeds of mercy with zealous, unflagging perseverance. During this time many deserters from the enemy came in. They had seen the hopelessness of their case, and had been urging, uselessly, the implacable Cronje to surrender.

The following is the list of those who were killed and wounded during the fight :—

Killed :—Mounted Infantry—Colonel Hannay.¹ 2nd Warwick—Lieutenant Hankay. Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry—Lieutenant-Colonel Aldworth,² Captain E. P. Wardlaw, Captain Newbury. Seaforth Highlanders—Second Lieutenant M'Clure. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders—Lieutenant Courtenay. West Riding Regiment—Lieutenant Siordet. 1st Yorkshire—Second Lieutenant Neave. Oxford Light Infantry—Lieutenant Bright, Second Lieutenant Ball-Acton. *Wounded* :—Staff—Major-General Knox (13th Brigade), Major-General Hector MacDonald (3rd Brigade). Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry—Captain J. H. Maunder, Lieutenant H. W. Fife, Second Lieutenant

¹ Colonel Ormelie Campbell Hannay was in his fifty-second year, having been born on December 23, 1848. He entered the army as an ensign in the 93rd Foot (now the Princess Louise's Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) on October 5, 1867, received his lieutenantancy on the 28th of October 1871, and from February to November 1878 was instructor of musketry. Obtaining his captaincy on November 17, 1878, he was employed on special service in South Africa during the latter part of the Zulu War, from June to October 1879, for which he had the medal with clasp. From April to September 1883 he was aide-de-camp to the brigadier-general at Aldershot, was gazetted a major in January 1884, and from September 1886 to November 1887 was again employed on staff service, for the first portion of the period as an aide-de-camp in Bengal, and for the latter portion in Bombay. He became lieutenant-colonel in June 1893, and colonel in June 1897, and in June 1899 was placed on the half-pay list, from which he was removed last October in order to take up the temporary appointment of assistant-adjutant-general at Portsmouth. Not till December 30, 1899, was he chosen for special service in South Africa.

² Lieutenant-Colonel William Aldworth, D.S.O., was forty-four years of age, having been born on October 3, 1855. He entered the army as a sub-lieutenant on June 13, 1874, and was gazetted to the 16th Foot, of which he was adjutant from October 17, 1877, to March 29, 1881. Gazetted a captain in the Bedfordshire Regiment on March 30, 1881, he served with the Burmese Expedition from January 14, 1885, to March 3, 1886, as aide-de-camp and acting military secretary to Sir Harry Prendergast, first as a major-general in Madras, and then as general officer commanding in Upper Burma, being mentioned in despatches and receiving the D.S.O. and the medal with clasp. He also took part in the Isazai Expedition in 1892, and in February 1893 was gazetted a major. In 1895 he served with the Chitral Relief Force under Sir Robert Low with the 1st battalion of his then regiment (the Bedfordshire), and took part in the storming of the Malakand Pass and the engagement near Khar, for which he had the medal with clasp. Again he was in active service in 1897-98, under Sir William Lockhart, in the campaign on the North-West Frontier of India, with the Tirah Expeditionary Force as deputy-assistant-adjutant-general of the 2nd Brigade, and with the Khyber Force as deputy-assistant-adjutant-general, being present at the forcing of the Sampagha and Arhanga Passes, and the operations against the Chamkanis and in the Bazar Valley. He was mentioned in despatches, received the brevet of lieutenant-colonel (May 20, 1898), and two clasps. He obtained the substantive rank of lieutenant-colonel in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry on October 12, 1898.

The Battle of Paardeberg

J. W. C. Fife, Second Lieutenant R. M. Grigg. Seaforth Highlanders—Captain G. C. Fielden, Captain E. A. Cowans, Captain G. M. Lumsden, Lieutenant J. P. Grant, Second Lieutenant D. P. Monypenny (died of wounds), Second Lieutenant A. R. Moncrieff. 1st Gordon Highlanders—Second Lieutenant W. B. J. Nutford. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders—Lieutenant C. N. Macdonald, Lieutenant G. Thorpe, Second Lieutenant G. A. Akers-Douglas, Second Lieutenant F. G. S. Cunningham. Black Watch—Lieutenant-Colonel A. M. Carthew-Yorkstoun, Major Hon. H. E. Maxwell, Major T. M. N. Berkeley, Captain J. G. H. Hamilton, Lieutenant J. G. Grieve (N.S.W. forces attached). West Riding Regiment—Captain F. J. de Gex, Captain H. D. E. Greenwood. 1st Yorkshire—Lieutenant-Colonel H. Bowles, Major Kirkpatrick, Lieutenant C. V. Edwards, Captain A. C. Buckle (South Stafford attached). Oxford Light Infantry—Major Day, Captain Watt, Lieutenant Hammich. East Kent Regiment—Captain Geddes. Shropshire Light Infantry—Captain Gubbins, Captain Smith, Lieutenant English, Second Lieutenant Kettlewell. Canadians—Captain H. M. Arnold (since died of wounds), Lieutenant J. C. Mason, Lieutenant Armstrong. R.A.M.C.—Captain J. E. C. Canter. Lieutenant G. H. Goddard. East Surrey—Captain A. H. S. Hart. 2nd Lincoln—Second Lieutenant Dockray Waterhouse. 1st Yorkshire—Second Lieutenant W. G. Turbet. 2nd Oxford Light Infantry—Captain Fanshawe, Lieutenant Stapleton. 2nd Bedford—Captain R. W. Waldy, Lieutenant Selous. 2nd Norfolk—Lieutenant Cramer-Roberts. 1st Welsh—Lieutenant-Colonel Banfield, Major Ball. 2nd East Kent—Captain Godfrey-Faussett, accidentally shot (died February 21). 1st West Riding—Captain Taylor, Captain Harris. Roberts' Horse—Lieutenant A. Grant. Argyll and Sutherland—Captain N. Malcolm, D.S.O. 1st Gordon Highlanders—Lieutenant Ingilby. 1st Welsh Regiment—Major Harkness, Lieutenant F. A. Jones, Lieutenant Veal. Mounted Infantry—Lieutenant-Colonel Tudway (1st Essex). 1st Essex—Captain Milward, Second Lieutenant Thomson. Missing—Captain Lennox, 81st Field Battery R.A.

The following table gives the distribution of the losses among officers :—

	<i>Killed.</i>	<i>Wounded.</i>	<i>Missing.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Staff	—	2	—	2
2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry	3	4	—	7
2nd Seaforth Highlanders	1	6	—	7
1st Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders	1	4	—	5
1st West Riding Regiment	1	2	—	3
1st Yorkshire Regiment	1	4	—	5
1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry	2	3	—	5
2nd East Kent Regiment	—	1	—	1
1st Gordon Highlanders	—	1	—	1
2nd Royal Highlanders	—	4	—	4
2nd Shropshire Light Infantry	—	4	—	4
Royal Canadian Regiment	—	2	—	2
Royal Army Medical Corps	—	2	—	2
81st Battery R.A.	—	—	1	1
Total	9	39	1	49

The heaviness of this list and the evenness with which the casualties were shared bear witness to the dash and daring displayed by all the battalions engaged.

The Transvaal War

A good deal of comment subsequently took place regarding the methods adopted during this day's warfare, and many were of opinion that the attempt to take the position by assault was unnecessarily wasteful of life. Considering the positions of the various regiments on the morning of the battle, it seemed as though the encircling of the enemy and forcing him to submission by a slow process of pressure would have served equally well to bring about the inevitable end. But again it has been urged that there was at the time no knowing how soon reinforcements might come to the assistance of Cronje, or what results might accrue from permitting the Boers—at the time breathless and weary—to gather themselves together for fresh resistance. Delay was evidently the one thing that Cronje was playing for, and Lord Kitchener, on his side, was averse from risks which might bring about the failure of the vital undertaking.

TRAPPED

The enemy had little rest. The small hours were spent in constructing entrenchments round the laager. All owned that their stubborn energy was admirable, but further active resistance on the part of Cronje was now beginning to be regarded by all—even his own people—as an act of suicide and murder. “It was magnificent, but it was not war,” as the Frenchman said. The Mounted Infantry and a battery of artillery next morning turned their attention to an offending kopje, whence the Boers could yet pour their equivalent for “cold water” on the British plans, and while circling round the position were accosted with a morning salutation from the rifles of the Federals on the summit of the hill. Fortunately the fusillade was launched with more vigour than accuracy, and there were no casualties. Pursuing their investigations, the troops discovered a good defensive position and seized it.

Early in the morning Cronje sent a white flag, demanding twenty-four hours' armistice for the purpose of burying his dead. This most probably being part of a wary plot to gain time for reinforcements to come to the rescue, a reply was sent back from Lord Kitchener to the effect that it was impossible to grant the request, which must await the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief. Lord Roberts was then on his way from Jacobsdal, and when the matter was referred to him, he at once sent a message refusing to accede to the proposition. General Cronje's reply, being roughly translated, implied that he wished to surrender, but when Lord Kitchener requested him to surrender in person, it was discovered that he had no notion of capitulation—unconditional surrender being the terms offered. Lord Roberts then ordered the resumption of the bombardment.

About mid-day came the rumour that French was at hand, and

Trapped

that he was taking his share of the great hemming-in movement, but the cavalry division was then nowhere in view. Lord Roberts arrived later, and addressed the troops, who welcomed him with cheers. Meanwhile the 18th, 62nd, and 75th field-batteries and the 65th (howitzer) battery surrounded the laager, and commenced an avalanche of destruction, the howitzers battering the river-bed with an enfilading fire, the fumes of lyddite rendering the surrounding air green with noxious vapour. Waggon after waggon of ammunition exploded with infernal uproar, shrapnel and lyddite danced diabolically over the river-bed and laager, yet there were no signs of surrender—not the flutter of a white flag in the direction where remained the obdurate man who, his last chance gone, refused to bow to the inevitable. Prisoners now and then, worn out and disgusted, came in, their rifles slung, and gave themselves up. In the laager were sixty women and girls, they said, and Cronje, “disconsolate and defiant, sat holding Mrs. Cronje’s hand and comforting her in the river-bed.” Meanwhile Broadwood’s brigade had appeared, exhausted and starving. The cavalry had come along the river-bank to Paardeberg in order to reach the forage and the convoy which was accompanying the infantry divisions from Klip Drift. Their state was lamentable, for it must be remembered that General Broadwood had galloped off during the night of the 16th almost provisionless. His brigade had borne the brunt of the fray, for General Gordon had only been able to follow later with some 120 horses out of his whole brigade. Colonel Porter’s brigade marched later still, owing to some accident with the telegraph. The work of relieving Kimberley and heading Cronje had cost the cavalry some 990 horses out of a total of 4800.

The loss of life, however, had not been excessive considering the strain and the engagements that had taken place between the 14th and 16th, but some goodly young officers were missing. Lieutenant Carbutt (R.H.A.), Lieutenant Brassey (9th Lancers), Lieutenant Hesketh (16th Lancers), and Lieutenant the Hon. M’Clintock Banbury (Scots Greys), were among the killed. Among the wounded were Captain Humfreys (Q Battery), Lieutenant Houston (P Battery), Lieut. Barnes (Q Battery), Captain Gordon and Lieut. Durand (9th Lancers), Captain Tuson (16th Lancers), Lieut. Fordyce and Second Lieut. Long (Scots Greys), Lieut. Johnson (Inniskilling Dragoons), Lieut. Gray (Roberts’ Horse). The fatigued remnant of the cavalry division now engaged in tackling the reinforcements that Cronje had so ardently expected.

In consequence of the huge circumference of the British circle, it was almost impossible to chronicle the innumerable small but brilliant actions which were continually taking place, and which in the excitement of the investment were almost overlooked. On the

The Transvaal War

night of the 19th the Gloucesters performed a dashing though futile feat. In the afternoon they neared a kopje in which the Dutchmen were ensconced. They bided their time, and just as the shades of night began to fall rushed on the enemy with bayonets and drove them off with considerable loss. The positions taken were evacuated, however, during the night.

On the 20th the Boers before dawn were again hard at work increasing their entrenchments all round their laager, but their plucky labours were impeded by continual shells which were launched now and again to prevent the work from being carried to completion. Meanwhile from the east came the echo of artillery, a rumour of battle which proved that the untiring French was actively engaged in standing between the Boer reinforcements and Cronje, who still held out gallantly in the fond yet forlorn hope of their ultimate arrival. He was humanely offered many chances to give in, but since he stoutly refused them all, measures were taken by Lord Roberts to bring the fighting to a speedy conclusion.

But the doggedly valiant attitude of the enemy was not lost on his assailants. It had been impossible to withhold from Cronje a certain admiration for the masterful manœuvres which extricated him from his impossible position at Majersfontein, or for the stubborn resistance with which his force, outwitted, harassed by the mounted infantry, and fighting a skilful rearguard action, had succeeded in getting at least thirty-five miles to Koodoosrand Drift. It was now equally impossible to overlook the magnificent energy of the man, who, with his means of flight at an end, his 50,000 lbs. of ammunition sacrificed, his stores captured, his oxen exhausted to the death, with almost certain defeat staring him in the face, could turn and fight an action both ferocious and sanguinary. Moreover, by the sheer magnetism of his personality he forced his followers to show a bold front and maintain a desperate, almost fatuous, courage in the face of the most terrific shelling that the century has known.

Little by little the enclosing circle began to grow narrower. The infantry—the Cornwalls assisted by the Engineers—again set to work to push the enemy still farther back into the river, but otherwise little advance was made. The position was now sufficiently terrible for the enemy. Cronje's trap was about a mile square, while commanding it in every direction were guns multifarious; bushes and banks and ravines were swept by cataracts of shrapnel, while volumes of greenish-yellow smoke from bursting lyddite curved and twisted around the river-bed, then carried their noxious vapour to the serene sapphire of the heavens. In the clear atmosphere the reiterations of Maxims filled up the pauses between the steady booming of artillery, while now and again the



CRONJE'S STRONGHOLD ON THE MODDER RIVER.

Drawing by H. C. Seppings Wright, from a Sketch by Frederic Villiers, War Artist.

Trapped

impotent despairing splutter of rifles from the enemy's laager mingled with the stertorous rampage.

On the fourth day of Cronje's resistance what might have been an unfortunate incident occurred. The Gloucester and Essex regiments by an accident had bivouacked on the north side of the river too close to the enemy's laager. The result was that on the first gleam of daylight they were discovered by the Dutchmen, who treated them to a volley by way of reveille. Luckily the firing was not at all up to the Boer mark and the regiments came off scot-free.

During the day General Smith Dorrien's force on the north worked towards the doomed laager while General Knox's brigade held the containing lines on the south side of the river. In the east General French was keeping an eye on a swarm of Boers who were hoping to come to the rescue of Cronje. These held a strong position on a kopje which seemed to be specially constructed by nature for defensive purposes. Still, when General Broadwood's brigade and a battery of horse-artillery turned their attention to the summit and scoured it thoroughly, the Dutchmen helter-skelter fled. Unluckily for them, their precipitate action took them straight into the arms of General French, who having headed them towards the drift, now gave them so warm a reception that numbers bit the dust. Some escaped, but fifty were taken prisoners. Forage, provisions, and equipment were also seized, though the corpses of the slain were carried off, so that the tale of loss could not be told.

The capture of the kopje was an excellent move, as it was a useful position whence to watch for and intercept reinforcements that might be coming from Ladysmith or elsewhere to the succour of the doomed. A message was sent to the obdurate Commandant offering a safe conduct and a free pass anywhere for the women and children. Lord Roberts also proffered medical attendance and drugs. The offers were curtly rejected. Finding courteous overtures of no avail, the bombardment of the position was resumed, and the artillery continued to fire till dusk put an end to the operations. While the firing was taking place the mules of the 82nd Battery, while still hitched to the waggons, took it into their heads to stampede, causing a scene of the wildest confusion. The next day, however, all save one waggon were recovered.

During the night the Shropshire Regiment accomplished a fine feat. They pressed forward some two hundred yards, captured new ground, and there entrenched themselves. It was an excellent finale to four days' incessant work under a withering fire, and by the 22nd they were fairly exhausted. They were then relieved by the Gordons. Here be it noticed that the Gordons were now

The Transvaal War

incorporated with the Highland Brigade, which was thus composed of four kilted regiments. The Highland Light Infantry, who wear "trews," had joined General Smith Dorrien's force.

The exchange of positions between the Shropshires and Gordons was effected in a manner worthy of the slim Boer himself, and showed that the Britons had speedily taken practical lessons from their adversaries. The Shropshires having, as said, seized 200 yards of new ground, they were relieved the following morning by the Gordons. The Highlanders, snake-like, wormed themselves forward to the trenches on their stomachs, while the Shropshire men in like manner crawled over the bodies of the relieving force. An officer who witnessed the evolution said, "I have often heard of walking on an empty stomach, but I'm hanged if I've ever seen the feat accomplished so well and so literally."

Another tremendous thunderstorm broke over the position, causing considerable discomfort to the troops, but still more to the unhappy creatures who, through the stout resistance of Cronje, were held to all the horrors of the trap into which he had fallen. We were now closing in on every side.

A grand attempt was made on the morning of the 23rd to bring help to the Dutchman. Commandant de Wet with a horde of some 1000 Boers, collected from the region of Ladysmith, appeared, and made a desperate effort to thrust himself through the British lines. Part of the force on its way towards its hoped-for destination was luckily accosted from a kopje occupied by the Scottish Borderers. The greeting, smart and accurate, was scarcely to the Dutchmen's liking, and they made off in another direction, but still with the same result. From position to position they were hunted, and in sheer despair they made for an unoccupied kopje, where they hoped at last to make a stand. But they were disappointed. The lively Scottish Borderers were "one too many for them." Seeing the Boers in act of seizing this point of vantage, the Borderers promptly hurled themselves in the coveted direction. There was an animated neck-and-neck race, and the Borderers, who won by a nose, promptly took possession of the hill and completely routed the Federals.

Finally the Boers found shelter in a kopje which was *vis-à-vis* to a like eminence held by the Yorkshires. A passage at arms followed, with the result that the fusillade of the enemy died a natural death. Then the Yorkshires, who had so strenuously brought about this result, were reinforced by the Buffs, lest some more of the Boer hosts from Ladysmith should put in an appearance. At this time the 75th and 62nd Batteries gave tongue from an adjacent farm, but their vociferous notes produced little effect upon the crown of the Boers' stronghold.

Trapped

So great was the silence that the Yorkshires moved on with a view to prodding the enemy in his lair, but, in the attempt, they were so furiously assailed by the shot of the enemy that they, in default of cover, were unable to proceed. Meanwhile the Buffs persevered, moving warily round the position till within 150 yards of the Dutchmen, who were eventually driven off. More than eighty—their horses having been shot—surrendered. On many of these were discovered explosive bullets, and it became evident that desperation was driving the Boers to disregard the rules of civilised warfare. Many of our wounded were found injured by these unholy missiles; and other tricks—barbarous tricks—were reported. On one occasion a Vickers-Maxim gun was directed at an ambulance, which at the time was fortunately unoccupied.

During the week our losses were fewer than on the opening day. Captain Dewar and Lieutenant Percival, 4th King's Royal Rifles, and Lieutenant Angell, Welsh Regiment, were killed. Among the wounded were:—

2nd Gloucester—Lieutenant-Colonel R. F. Lindsell; 2nd Derbyshire—Lieutenant C. D. M. Harrington; 9th Lancers—Captain Campbell; P.R.H.A.—Lieutenant Houston; Royal Engineers—Captain Crookshank; 1st Lincoln—Second Lieutenant Wellesley; Argyll and Sutherland—Lieutenant and Adjutant Glasford; 1st East Kent Regiment (attached 2nd Battalion)—Lieutenant Hickman; 2nd Lincoln—Captain Gardner; King's Own Scottish Borderers—Captain Pratt; East Kent—Captain Marriott; Yorkshire—Captain Pearson, Lieutenant Gunthorpe, 2nd Lieutenant Wardle.

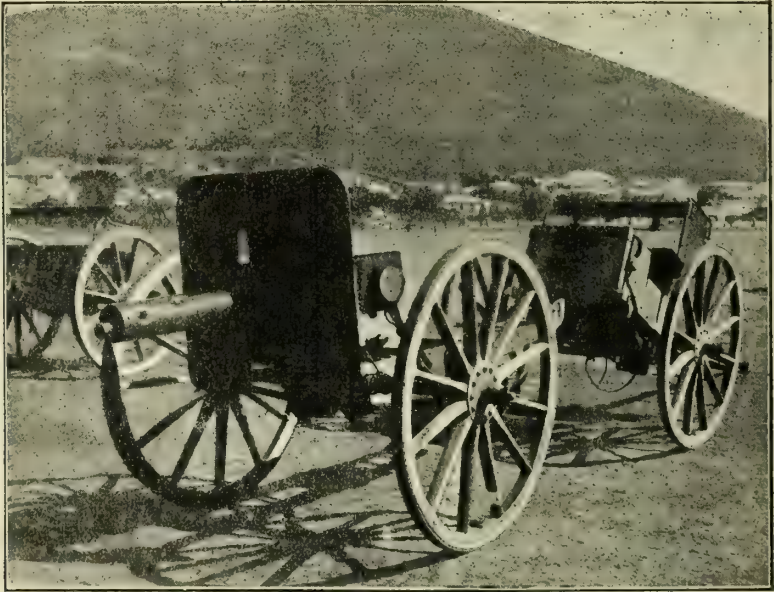
Lieutenant Metge (1st Welsh Regiment) was missing.

Daily the enemy was squeezed into a smaller space. General Smith Dorrien had now pushed up the river-bed to within two hundred yards of Cronje's entrenchments. The object lesson in perseverance, both on the part of Boers and British, was becoming almost awe-inspiring—the tension was veritably appalling. Soaked with rain to the very skin—the fevered skin that had been scorched, and toasted, and begrimed with dust—our men, grim and fierce, with the storm-winds piping the pipe of death about their ears, held their ground. Rations had been intermittent till the convoys began to come in, and, almost fasting, they had been acutely conscious of the foul, the nauseating atmosphere that now enveloped them like a loathely vaporous entanglement. The river had swollen and bore upon its turbid breast horrific revelations—thousands of rotting carcases and festering loads of poisonous wreckage, that rendered the act even of drawing breath almost a heroism. All along the great march endurance had been put to supreme test, for the track had been margined with the dead bodies of exhausted oxen and horses. These lay littered about, unburied, disembowelled, and in various stages of putrefaction. Everywhere vultures and flies and other

The Transvaal War

loathsome parasites of the veldt hovered and sidled and crawled, glutting themselves at veritable orgies of destruction, and contesting their prizes with the winds. These, taking their fill, hastened to diffuse the remains of the grisly banquet far and wide. Thus the foul dust, wantonly distributed, blew in the throats and eyes and ears of gallant men, and contributed death more liberally, more pitifully, than even the bullets of the Boers!

Plentiful rain had fallen, saturating humanity, and causing the heated ground to refract the fumes of a charnel-house. But in one way better times had come. There was fuller fare. Large convoys made a daily appearance, and the men were refreshed after their labours with the promise of plenty. Food of a substantial kind was



GUNS CAPTURED AT PAARDEBERG. Photo by Alf. S. Hosking, Cape Town.

indeed necessary, for it served to attune the stomach to the noxious vapours that hourly grew almost tangible. Cronje, though he knew it not, was sowing the seeds of a harvest of revenge! He was killing his thousands! For many days our troops had been enduring lenten fare; they had rung the changes on hardships, fatigues, and self-abnegations of all kinds. They had been battered on by storms. They had outstripped transport and supplies. They had kept the inner man appeased and working on quarter rations. They had marched like giants in ten-league boots, and meanwhile fed like fairies; yet withal had borne countenances cheery and

Trapped

noble, full of confidence and unquenchable pluck. But these splendid creatures were but mortal. The foul fiends of enteric and malaria were already sapping their buoyant constitutions, and marking them, one after another, with the deadly seal of possession.

Every day of the Dutchman's resistance was therefore full of horror, full of anxiety. There were continual rumours that the Boer reinforcements were in view, that the Federals were massing for a desperate effort. Wearied and battered, the cavalry at Koodoosrand were perpetually speeding on wild-goose chases, in one of which both General French and Colonel Haig nearly lost their lives. A reconnaissance in force had been ordered. The drift, swollen by rains, was now a torrent, and in crossing the General and his A.D.C. were thrown by their restive horses into the river, whence they only emerged safe and sound in consequence of their being fine swimmers and pneumonia-proof Britons.

Cronje, finding that the reinforcements failed to reach him, decided on the night of the 26th to cut his way out and seize a kopje before dawn. But his intention was frustrated by the Mounted Infantry, who, in spite of the darkness, kept a watchful eye on the slippery enemy.

Quite early on the morning of the 27th of February, the anniversary of Majuba day, the splutter of musketry greeted the ears of the dozing camp. Some one was up and doing early. It was the Canadians. They were acting on the principle of the early bird that catches the morning worm. Supported by the Gordons, Cornwalls, and Shropshires, they were advancing, building a trench in the very teeth of the enemy, and at fifty yards' range were saluting him with such deadly warmth as to render his position untenable. How this energetic and gallant movement, the wonder and admiration of all, was brought about was described by the correspondent of the *Times*. "It appeared that Brigadier-General MacDonald sent from his bed a note to Lord Roberts, reminding him that Tuesday was the anniversary of that disaster which, we all remembered, he had by example, order, and threat himself done his best to avert, even while the panic had been at its height; Sir Henry Colville submitted a suggested attack backed by the same unanswerable plea. For a moment Lord Roberts demurred to the plan; it seemed likely to cost too heavily, but the insistence of Canada broke down his reluctance, and the men of the oldest colony were sent out in the small hours of Tuesday morning to redeem the blot on the name of the mother-country.

"From the existing trench, some 700 yards long, on the northern bank, held jointly by the Gordons and the Canadians, the latter were ordered to advance in two lines—each, of course, in extended order—thirty yards apart, the first with bayonets fixed, the second rein-

The Transvaal War

forced by fifty Royal Engineers under Colonel Kincaid and Captain Boileau.

"In dead silence, and covered by a darkness only faintly illuminated by the merest rim of the dying moon, 'with the old moon in her lap,' the three companies of Canadians moved on over the bush-strewn ground. For over 400 yards the noiseless advance continued, and when within eighty yards of the Boer trench the trampling of the scrub betrayed the movement. Instantly the outer trench of the Boers burst into fire, which was kept up almost without intermission from five minutes to three o'clock to ten minutes past the hour. Under this fire the courage and discipline of the Canadians proved themselves. Flinging themselves on the ground, they kept up an incessant fire on the trenches, guided only by the flashes of their enemy's rifles; and the Boers admit that they quickly reduced them to the necessity of lifting their rifles over their heads to the edge of the earthwork and pulling their triggers at random. Behind this line the Engineers did magnificent work; careless of danger, the trench was dug from the inner edge of the bank to the crest, and then for fifty or sixty yards out through the scrub. The Canadians retired three yards to this protection and waited for dawn, confident in their new position, which had entered the protected angle of the Boer position, and commanded alike the rifle-pits of the banks and the trefoil-shaped embrasures on the north."

For some time it seemed as though hostilities were suspended, and then—a sign, a flutter of white, a signal of surrender caught the straining eyes of the regiment nearest the crest of the hill. In an instant the plains and the hollows, the kopjes, and even the dome of heaven, seemed animated—lending themselves to repeat the ringing cheer, to reiterate the cry of an immense joyous heart splitting a little universe in twain. Ears languid, ears hard-working, ears occupied, ears expectant, all caught the sound, echoed it and knew that at last the looked-for hour had come, Cronje had surrendered! Many Boers threw up their hands and dashed unarmed across the intervening space; others waved white flags and exposed themselves carelessly on their entrenchments, but not a shot was fired. Colonel Otter and Colonel Kincaid held a hasty consultation, which was disturbed by the sight of Sir Henry Colvile (commanding the Ninth Division) quietly riding down within 500 yards of the northern Boer trenches to bring the news that at that very moment a horseman was hurrying in with a white flag and Cronje's unconditional surrender, to take effect at sunrise.

The Surrender of Cronje

THE SURRENDER OF CRONJE

Then all was activity. A note was borne to Lord Roberts stating that Cronje had given in, and General Pretymán thereupon rode out to take his surrender. The scene was highly impressive. Lord Roberts, in front of the cart in which he slept, walked up and down awaiting his prisoner, while a guard of the Seaforth Highlanders with drawn bayonets formed a line to either side. In the distance a small group of horsemen was seen approaching, a silhouette which gradually grew clearer in the golden light of the morning. It was General Pretymán with the redoubtable Cronje riding a white pony on his right and the escort of the 12th Lancers following. The subsequent scene was a study in reserve. After all the tumultuous passions, the ferocity of bloodshed, the diamond-cut-diamond activities of death-dealing lyddite and Vickers-Maxims, the two leaders met without the smallest sign of emotion. To Lord Roberts, who stood with his staff awaiting him, Colonel Pretymán said, "Commandant Cronje, sir!" The two great men looked at each other, the Dutchman touched his hat, the Englishman returned the salute. The group dismounted, and then, regretfully be it noted, Lord Roberts, the blameless upright British soldier gave his hand to the tyrant of Potchefstroom. "You have made a gallant defence, sir," said the British Commander-in-Chief; "I am glad to see you. I am glad to get so brave a man!"

The picture of the redoubtable Cronje as he approached our great little Field-Marshal was remarkable in its contrast. On the one side you saw a burly square-jawed agriculturist, grizzly of beard, tanned and battered of complexion, portly and cumbrous of form. On the other, you had the lithe figured aristocratical British soldier, trim in his khaki uniform, and wearing his sword with the air of nameless distinction which belongs to the born ruler of men. Cronje's aspect was that of a substantial farmer, his heavy cane, his slouch hat encircled by its orange leather band, his bottle-green overcoat and tan boots were distinctly bucolic, but his rigid implacable countenance, an utterly impenetrable façade, betrayed the masterly and indomitable character of the man.

There is no doubt that by his fierce, his masterly resistance to the British he won for himself the respect of all who trapped him. His undoubted pluck, a quality which has such unending fascination for the English, served in a great measure to wipe off the terrible remembrance of his atrocious deeds in other years. Cronje spoke scarcely a word. He said there were 3000 Boers in the laager—as a matter of fact, there were over 3700—and also requested that his wife, son, grandson, and secretary might be allowed to remain with him. This request was acceded to; arrangements were made that

The Transvaal War

his relatives should accompany him into captivity. He then partook of refreshment in Lord Roberts' quarters with the staff. Though he smoked, he said little and remained gloomy and preoccupied.

The prisoners trooped across the river like some patriarchal or gipsy horde, with trousers turned up so as not to damp them in the swollen drift. They splashed along, each armed with his household effects, pots and pans, blankets and rifles, some jesting and skipping in sheer exuberance of animal spirits that long had been subdued, some stolid and serious in the full comprehension of the grievous end of all their pluck and endurance. And they had endured! From the hundreds of wounded that were brought in the same tale of suspense, and misery, and horror was told in varying keys. Always they had awaited reinforcement; they had even invented a scheme for cutting a way out to meet the relieving force which never came. But volunteers for this deed of daring were few. About a hundred in all. This meagre array was not sufficient. Others had pressed on the relentless Cronje the philosophy of surrender. They urged that directly, if not annihilated by shell fire, they would be laid low by fever; already eighty-seven men were slain and a hundred and sixty wounded. These had no doctors even to attend them. The surgeons had been left behind on the Modder, and the offer of Lord Roberts of medicine and succour had been refused. The suffering had indeed been terrible and now was of no avail.

It was not pleasing to the vanity of the British army to find themselves confronted with such a rabble of tatterdemalions, and to remember how this nondescript mob had so long held them in check. But there was no denying that the ruffians had qualities, and that they, unkempt and undisciplined as they were, had proved themselves foemen worthy of our steel and tacticians meriting study.

It was curious how much our troops had learnt both from the undisciplined Boers and the inexperienced Colonials. From the latter they picked up the art of taking cover, and from the former the art of obtaining it. The Boer was not content merely to crouch behind a stone and show a head only when about to shoot. He cunningly arranged his sangar so that he should expose no head at all. He built up his small stones to the necessary height, taking care to leave a central loophole through which he could take aim and yet remain invisible. An officer, in giving his opinion of the Boer as a fighter, showed the lessons that had been taught by him. "As a defender of defensive positions in a mountainous country he is unequalled. He digs good trenches and chooses good defensive positions, and he lies there quietly and waits for his enemy to advance across the open. But he never, hardly ever, dares to attack in the open, and if his flank



"MAJUBA DAY"—CRONJE SURRENDERS TO LORD ROBERTS AT PAARDEBERG.

Drawing by R. Caton Woodville, from a Sketch by Frederic Villiers, War Artist.

The Surrender of Cronje

is turned or his rear threatened, he gets nervous, and retires to a better position if he can. If our positions could be reversed—that is, if Tommy Atkins had to defend the kopjes, and if the Boers had to attack them in the open, there can be no doubt as to the result. Tommy, perhaps, would not be quite so good as the Boer in defence, but, on the other hand, the Boer would fail in the attack; indeed, he could not be brought to attempt it. As a shooter the Boer is no better than our own men. The only difference is that he attempts to shoot at far longer ranges. The Boer has taught us to dig big trenches and to use big guns as mobile artillery."

The mobility of the big guns was at the moment more of a puzzle than ever. The Boers were in possession of some Vickers-Maxims in laager, two 15-pounders, and some big guns. We captured the minor weapons, but the big ones were sedulously hidden, and how they had vanished became a problem that was never solved. It was supposed they were buried in the bed of the river, but search failed to unearth them.

Trophies innumerable were picked up. Sir Howard Vincent succeeded in securing a quaint seventeenth-century Bible, and Roberts' Horse possessed themselves of Cronje's green bell-tent and ox-waggon. One cavalry officer thought himself lucky to secure a new pair of stays marked "11 $\frac{3}{4}$, waist 28 inches," evidently the property of a capacious vrow. Letters multifarious were found, among them Cronje's commission, signed by President Steyn.

Most of the prisoners, when interrogated, declared they were sick of the war, and confessed that but for their fear of Cronje they would long ago have surrendered. His was the powerful, the guiding hand. Some of them expressed queer notions of the causes of the trouble, giving forth at second and even third hand—and in a very garbled condition—the sentiments poured into them by "sympathisers."

Said one, "The war is got up by the capitalists. The generals arrange a victory or a reverse to suit their own interests on the Stock Exchange!"

A private remonstrated, "You don't include Lord Roberts? You'll admit that he is disinterested!"

"Not a bit of it! He is a shareholder along with Chamberlain and Rhodes and the other millionaires. They all look after number one."

Against such prejudice and ignorance it was useless to argue.

Some of the Free Staters expressed their joy at being relieved of the company of the Boers. They had been on bad terms with them, and had scarcely dared to speak a word in English for fear of their lives. One declared that he was not permitted even to address his horse in the odious language!

The Transvaal War

There were great and astonishing contrasts in the groups of prisoners that were gathered together. Many of them were youths of sixteen to eighteen years of age. Some seemed in a hopeless stage of sickness and despair, others attenuated by the amount of vinegar consumed to cure the stupefying effects of our lyddite. Endurance, it was plainly to be seen, had been carried to the last pitch. Some, on the other hand, appeared as though already reviving with the relaxation of the strain to which they had been subjected; some even delighted to find themselves in British hands, no longer tormented by "hell-scrapers," as they called the shrapnel, and already clamouring to partake of spirits and refreshment, for which they had longed in vain. The rapture at their deliverance overcame all other sentiments; they had no thought for the ups and downs of the war, and many, indeed, were still unaware of the causes that had led them to share in it. Cronje had evidently kept a tight hand on them, and but for his unique influence many would long before have surrendered. This peculiar despotism was marvellous when it is considered that none of the younger commanders could induce more than a portion of his commando to follow him from the Natal side to the scene of operations. Cronje had the privilege of being the most admired and well-detested person on the stage of the moment, and one Boer was seen clenching his fist in the direction of the vanquished tyrant and exclaiming, "You hard man! you deserve to be shot." There were many who heard him who endorsed the opinion.

A great deal of undue attention seemed to be bestowed on the Dutch Commandant, and evidently it was his undisputed military genius that earned for him the admiration of his conquerors. Only to this final display of skill and pluck can be attributed the deference paid to a man whose Anglophobia had made itself prominent for many years, one who cut such a despicable figure in his relations with us at Potchefstroom, and who was responsible in particular for much of the brutality which has been accredited to the Boers in general. It was certainly a case of turning the other cheek to the smiter, for the captive was allowed to take with him his wife, and retain in his possession his favourite horse, Wolmarens!

Accompanied by Mrs. Cronje, he was sent to Cape Town in a covered waggon, guarded by a special convoy under the command of Colonel Pretymann. There was considerable pathos in the scene of departure, for many of the other prisoners had gone through the ordeal of the bombardment with their wives by their sides, and these, less fortunate than Mrs. Cronje, had to be left behind!

The majority of people, it must be owned, were horrorstruck at the consideration shown to one to whom the word consideration was an empty name. A Scottish Colonial, writing home, expressed his irritation at the mode in which warfare was conducted. He said:

The Surrender of Cronje

"Cronje is now a hero, housed in the Admiral's cabin on board the *Doris*. He is probably saying, 'What fools the British are.' For, give him a chance, and he would commit again the treacherous murders for which he has been responsible in the past with as little compunction as he would feel at putting his heel on a scorpion. I wonder if we may take this bit of foolishness as an indication of the way in which England is going to settle up finally with the Republics. Her policy has so often before ended in weakness that one cannot help feeling nervous."

He was merely one of a thousand who argued that it was impossible to go to war with kid-gloves on, and who regretted the terms of the proclamation which had been made on the entry of Lord Roberts to the Free State. This proclamation, which will be discussed anon, was another of the nineteenth-century humanitarian movements which were mistakenly applied to seventeenth-century comprehension. To return to the events of Majuba day.

Lord Roberts subsequently visited the Boer laager, and testified his admiration of the ingenuity and energy with which the position was made almost impregnable to assault. In spite of ten days' bombardment by over fifty guns and howitzers, the number of Boer wounded was said to amount to only 160—a fact which went to prove that the power of artillery can be broken by the ingenious use of the spade. The entrenchments, when examined, proved to be most skilfully contrived, with narrow mouths some eighteen inches wide, and wide bases, some quite three feet broad, which rendered them almost impregnable to shell fire.

The effect of the bombardment was terrific. The laager presented an appearance of black chaos, varied only by streaks of yellow, which told of the gambols of lyddite. Waggons were wrecked with shrapnel; some had ceased to exist; rings and twists and girandoles of distorted metal were all that was left of them. Within the laager was a decaying, disordered mass of Boer belongings, saddles innumerable, karosses and panniers, coats and feminine apparel, fragments of old tin trunks, and 2,000,000 rounds of ammunition; wreckage of all sorts, united by the super-evident, unavoidable, and persistent bonds of stench, which permeated everything, weaving visible and invisible in one noxious nightmare of the senses.

Round this arena of pestilence sentries were posted. It was necessary to prevent loot, though little of value remained save munitions of war. Most of the Boer property had been left behind in the hurried rush from Majersfontein and Spysfontein. Still the locality had to be guarded, and the guards, as well as all who approached, had to pocket their sensibilities. Indeed, it was a marvel how the Boers had managed to exist in the pestilential

The Transvaal War

atmosphere that pervaded the river-bed. Dotted everywhere, or collected in heaps, already rotting in the tropical heat, were the remains of horses, mules, and cattle, some of which had been driven to death, while others had been hurried there by the voice of our howitzers or the rain of our rifle fire. In the fringe of this atmosphere our troops had lived for some three days past, for nightly they had advanced some fifty to an hundred yards nearer the laager, and there dug trenches and located themselves, till, at the end, the last three nights were passed almost within pistol-shot of the enemy and in the thick of a stench whose opacity was well-nigh suffocating.

An interesting account of his enforced stay in the laager was given by a trooper in Kitchener's Horse, who was taken prisoner on the day previous to the great battle which settled Cronje's fate. He had become separated from the rest of his troop while scouting along the Modder River. When he looked round for his friends, he found himself surrounded by a party of Boers, who, jumping from the bushes, fired upon him. His horse was shot and rolled over upon the young trooper, carrying him with him into the river. The Boers rescued him, relieved him of his bandolier, and made him prisoner. Together they went to the laager. "There," the trooper said, "I was taken before Commandant Cronje, who asked me our strength and movements. On my replying that I was only a trooper, and did not know, he said, 'Oh, never mind; if you don't want to tell me, I shall not try to make you.' A guard was placed over me, and we stayed the night in the laager. I should say there were about 6000 Dutchmen all told, and forty women and children. A great many among them were Irishmen, a few Scotchmen; in short, almost every nation was more or less numerously represented. All that night they were busy entrenching themselves, employing a great deal of native labour to help them." Through the whole of the 18th of February the young man endured the bombardment, which he described as so heavy that it was impossible to remain in the laager, and consequently all, even the women and children, took refuge in the trenches. The Boers' mode of firing he specially made a note of: "The Boers did not in the least mind our attack, and laughed amongst themselves as they saw the men advancing. They allowed them to come up to about 600 yards from the trenches, and then opened a tremendous fire from their rifles. It did not seem to be aimed at any particular man, but more at a certain fixed distance. At that they fired as fast as they could. The range was obtained by a few fixed shots, who fired, watched the dust caused by the strike of the bullets, and then gave out the range. Our men came up to within 150 yards and then retired. They fired volleys at the longer

The Surrender of Cronje

distances, but all their fire seemed to me to be short." Each day there were losses, but comparatively few, as the bottle-shaped trenches afforded excellent cover; those that fell, however, were buried where they lay. He went on to say that "The shelling of Monday night destroyed several waggons, two of which were on either side of Cronje's own. No one could have been braver than he was. He stood upon the waggon-step, field-glasses in hand, and did not seem to care in the least how thickly the shells and bullets fell. Many of the Free Staters, however, were quite the reverse, and were in a great state of terror when the bombardment began. The ammunition waggons blew up, and several of the provision waggons were burned. The shrapnel killed the majority of the horses and cattle, which had no shelter but the banks of the river. Beyond that the fire did little real damage." The prisoner declared his belief that "could they have kept their laager out of fire they would never have surrendered. The loss of the provision waggons was what caused them to give in. They had only four days' food left. Their ammunition was still plentiful. After the explosion of the ammunition waggons by shell-fire on February 19, all the remaining cartridges were distributed throughout the trenches, and on the south side every trench was still full of unused ammunition. Everything was done in the trenches, even the cooking, each individual having with him a box of provisions sunk into the ground. These boxes were replenished at night as there was no possibility of reaching the laager during the day."

Lord Roberts addressed the Canadians, and expressed his satisfaction and appreciation of the splendid work they had done and the courage they had shown. To them he attributed the greater share in the Boer surrender. All were delighted at the attention shown the heroic Colonials, who had done splendid work, and at the exhibition of Lord Roberts' tact and kindness in thus singling out the Canadians for the position of honour. In the Jubilee of 1897 the Field-Marshal had told the Colonial Bodyguard that he would like to have them with him if he were ever in another campaign, and now the Canadians felt that the Chief's cherished words had been no mere formula, and that they had been given the chance to distinguish themselves that they had so eagerly desired.

To General Colville was given the credit of inventing the order of attack which at last brought the Boers to their senses. He arranged that the first rank should advance, bayonets fixed, till the enemy opened fire. Then they were to lie down and continue to fire on the Boers, while Engineers and the second line dug a trench. The trench thus made was within eighty yards of those of the Boers, and, owing to its trefoil shape, the troops were able to enfilade both the

The Transvaal War

river and northern trenches of the enemy and make them untenable. From their point in the original trench the Gordon Highlanders kept up a brisk fire, while the Shropshire Light Infantry, who were posted over a thousand yards to the north-west of the position, co-operated.

In the very successful attack on the enemy's trenches the Royal Canadian Contingent lost seven killed and twenty-nine wounded. Major Pelletier, who commanded the French company, foremost



BOER TRENCHES AT PAARDEBERG. Photo by Alf. S. Hosking, Cape Town.

of the three companies, was wounded, and also Lieutenant Armstrong. It is interesting to note that few of this gallant company of Great Britain's defenders could speak English!

Colonel Otter, in command of the Canadians, had distinguished himself on many occasions by rare coolness and display of great talent in the field, and he now took pleasure in reporting excellently

The Surrender of Cronje

of the various members of the battalion under his command who had especially distinguished themselves. Among these were :—

Captain H. B. Stairs, 66th P. L. Fusiliers, and Lieutenant and Captain A. H. Macdonell, Royal Canadian Regiment. E Company, No. 5130, Corporal T. E. Baugh, R.C.R. F Company, No. 7782, Private O. Matheson, 12th Newcastle Field Battery; No. 7803, Private A. Sutherland, D. of Y. R. C. Hrs.; No. 7868, Sergeant W. Peppeatt, Royal Canadian Artillery; No. 7871, Corporal R. D. M'Donald, Royal Canadian Artillery; No. 7822, Private C. Harrison, 2nd Montreal Regiment C.A.; No. 7841, Private A. Bagot, 65th Montreal Rifles; No. 7778, Private Sievert, 93rd Cumberland Infantry; No. 7615, Private A. T. Serialt, 9th Voltigeurs de Quebec.

But these were only a select few among the number who were engaged in incomparable things done incomparably well.

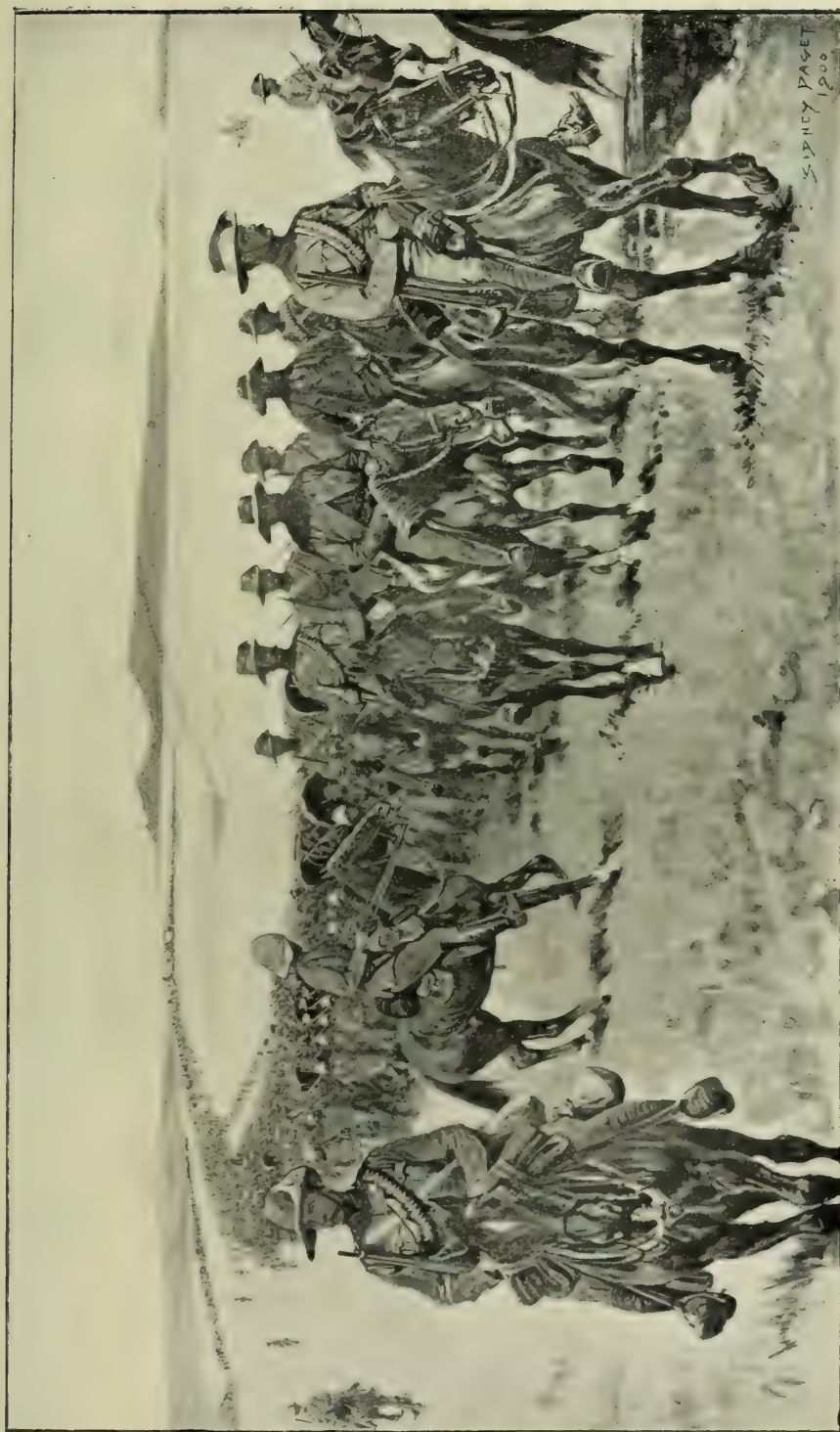
CHAPTER II

MAFEKING IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY

CHRISTMAS DAY, in deference to warlike etiquette, was observed as a holiday ; but, in spite of the pacific nature of the occasion, the man who was the brain of Mafeking was organising a plan by which the cordon around the town might be broken. He was deciding that there must be a big fight on the morrow, and that a desperate effort must be made to change the cramped vista of affairs. Waiting was a weary game, and it was felt that some one must make a move. The Boers certainly, had they chosen, might have carried the town by assault, but for such activity they had no appetite. This was no boy's job, and, as they themselves confessed, they went out to shoot, not to be shot. Not so the gentle civilians, who, while incarcerated in this little hamlet of the veldt, had developed into valiant campaigners. They were always ready to be up and doing, and gladly fell in with the Colonel's plans. Frequent reconnaissances had disclosed the fact that the enemy's position, though strong on the western face, was fairly vulnerable at a point on the east, and at this point it was decided an attack on the morning of the 26th should be directed.

The plan of attack was as follows :—Captain R. Vernon, King's Royal Rifles, with C Squadron, and Captain FitzClarence and D Squadron, to lead ; Captain Lord Charles Bentinck, with A Squadron, to hold the reserve upon the left, which was under the command of Colonel Hore. Major Panzera and the artillery were to take up a position upon the extreme left of the line. The railway running to within a few hundred yards of Game Tree had been repaired, in order that the armoured train, under Captain Williams and twenty men of the British South Africa Police, with one-pounder Hotchkiss and Maxim, from a point parallel with Game Tree, might protect the right flank. This flank was to be further supported by Captain Cowan and seventy men of the Bechuanaland Rifles. The entire operations from this side were to be under the command of Major Godley, while Colonel Baden-Powell and his staff, Major Lord Edward Cecil (Chief Staff Officer), Captain Wilson, A.D.C., and Lieutenant Hanbury Tracy watched the direction of events from Dummie Fort.

It must be remembered that at that time the character of the fort they intended to assail was barely known. In reality, it rose



CRONJE'S FORCE ON THEIR MARCH SOUTH.

Drawing by Sidney Paget, from a Sketch made 8 Miles South of Paardeberg by W. B. Wollen, R.I.

Mafeking in December and January

some seven feet above a ditch deep and wide, which almost defied assault. However, it was decided that Game Tree, from which had poured voluble rifle and artillery fire for many weeks, must at all hazards be silenced. It was most important that communication with the north should be, if possible, re-established, and there was every hope that a successful fight might make it easier for Colonel Plumer to eventually join hands with the besieged.

The night passed. As the grey dawn broke over the veldt, a flash weirdly orange and a golden puff of smoke showed that the preconcerted plan had begun to be put in operation. Major Panzera with his seven-pounders had started the programme. Presently the Maxim rapped out in chorus, while on the right the great dusty crocodile, the armoured train, slunk along to its destination. Its whistle shrieked. It was Captain Vernon's signal for action. On the instant a thin line of moving kharki broke from cover, bayonets glittered among the scrub, cheers and the rattle of musketry filled the air. Officers and men were dashing, as only Britons can dash, each striving to outrush the other towards the lair of the enemy. Quick as thought they had plunged into the scrub that girdled the sandbags, and excitedly, jubilantly, some one on Dummie Fort sang out, "They are swarming over the bags—the position is ours!"

All waited anxiously, almost breathlessly. The moments grew and grew, seconds became years. The sputtering of rifles continued, and swelled into a vast hum, and then some one—the same some one, only in a very different voice from that which spoke last, said hoarsely, "Our men are coming back!" . . . Yes. They were indeed coming back—the remnant—firing sullenly their parting shots ere they receded. The enemy's position had been proved impregnable! Their parapet was loopholed in triple tiers and roofed with a bomb-proof protection. It had but a single opening, large enough to admit one man at a time. It was in firing his revolver into one of the loopholes and endeavouring to pull out a sandbag with his left hand that Lieutenant Paton was killed. Captain FitzClarence, far ahead of his men, was shot in the thigh within 150 yards of the fort, and both Captains Sandford and Vernon were laid low almost within a stone's throw of the rifles of the enemy. Lieutenant Swinburne, who, directly Captain FitzClarence was wounded, led his men forward with dauntless energy, escaped unhurt. But few were equally lucky. Out of a storming party of eighty, twenty-one were killed and thirty-three wounded. It was when he saw this useless sacrifice of life that Major Godley sent a message to headquarters by the aide-de-camp. "Captain Vernon, sir, has been repulsed," he said, "and Major Godley does not think it worth while trying again." Nor was it. All that could be done was to send the ambulance to perform its grim duty.

The Transvaal War

In describing the tragic affair, Mr. Angus Hamilton, in *Black and White*, said: "Indeed, from the armoured train it could be seen that the progress of the men towards the fort was like the Charge of the Six Hundred into the Valley of Death—a conviction which became more and more apparent as our men gallantly held to their course. Within 300 yards of the fort it was almost impossible for any living thing to exist, and the rush of the bullets across the zone of fire was like the hum of myriads of locusts before the wind. The gallantry of the effort, the admirable steadiness and precision with which the attack was delivered, has been compared by our commanding officers to deeds which rank among the foremost of our martial chronicles."

It was veritably a charge of heroes. Scarcely one man could be singled out as the bravest of the brave where all showed such magnificent courage. Captain Sandford, Indian Staff Corps, though wounded mortally by a bullet in the spine, with his last breath ordered his men to continue their advance and leave him to his fate. Captain FitzClarence, wounded in the leg, bleeding, exhausted, was seen sitting up and directing the charge. Elsewhere was Captain Vernon, with a bullet through him, rushing on and on in company with the heroic youth, Paton, whose effort to scale the inaccessible rampart brought about his death. This splendid fellow was shot through the heart; while Captain Vernon, who had again been hit, and still pursued his onward course into the teeth of the foe, was struck on the head and killed. The only other officer that escaped uninjured was Lieutenant Bridges, and he hurt his ankle while assisting a wounded comrade. The details of the killed and wounded were as follows:—Officers killed, three; wounded, one. Men killed, eighteen; wounded, thirty-two; missing, thirteen. Thus ended a superb effort, which, failure though it was, was vastly superior to many a meaner martial success.

So the garrison had to go on in the old, old way, though many popular and beloved members were now missing, and the hospital was full of cases that threatened to end seriously. Owing to the commendable forethought of Lord Edward Cecil and the enterprise of Messrs. Julius Weil, the garrison was provided with the wherewithal to make what resistance they did. Lord Edward Cecil's work was ceaseless; as Chief Staff Officer he came in for both the external fights and the internal discords. He smoothed down quarrels, dispensed justice, allayed "siege fever" in all its intermittent phases, and in fact performed the tasks of ten men, with unfailing courtesy and inexhaustible patience. The pinch of the siege had gradually become more painful, and luxuries for some time had been commandeered for the use of the sick. Luckily, some Chinamen among the besieged contrived to grow vegetables

Mafeking in December and January

in small quantities for the use of the inhabitants, and by force of good management in the disposal of the food supplies, which had been stocked by Messrs. Weil before the outbreak of the war, a fixed scale of rations for every man, woman, and child was secured. Conversation grew monotonous. It circled round the positions of the guns, the chance of relief, and question of stores, till it produced a mental giddiness that verged on the idiotic. Few grumbled, few swore. In this matter the Boers acted as a safety-valve. When people felt in the "something's too bad of somebody" mood, they could go out and snipe, and vent their spleen usefully and to the honour of their country! Sundays were more than ever flat. There was not the excitement attendant on dodging shells in the open. Speculation on the subject of food languished round the limitations of Hobson's choice. Mr. Neilly in the *Pall Mall Gazette* gave a sorry outline of the scanty fare. "I will attempt to give you an idea of what this scarcity of diet means. You are in a trench. In the early morning you have handed to you a piece of bread as big as a breakfast roll and a little tin of 'bully' sufficient for one average meal. You have some of it for breakfast, and if you have not an iron will you will eat the lot there and then, and go hungry for the rest of the twenty-four hours. What you leave is kept in the broiling sun until luncheon-time, when you find the beef reduced to an oily mess that does not look very appetising. You eat more and tighten your belt a hole or two to delude yourself into the belief that you have had a satisfying meal. You roast away again until dinner-time, when you gather up the last crumb and sigh for a few hours in the Adelaide Gallery or even in an East-End cookshop. But this is not all; you are for guard duty from midnight until 3 A.M. You have no sleep before you go on, and the slumber you fall into when relieved is destroyed an hour after you have entered upon it by the morning order to stand to arms. You thus get a schoolboy's luncheon to keep you alive for twenty-four hours. It is made unpalatable by the sun, and if a Mafeking shower falls, the odds are that it will be flooded over and buried in the mud at the bottom of the trench."

At this time Cronje, by way of recreation, returned to Mafeking, a fleeting visit, possibly to test some novel plans for the purpose of subduing the town. He came armed with incendiary shells, which were supposed to hit and blaze up and cause an inspiring conflagration. But they did not succeed. They caused a conflagration certainly, but its duration was limited. At the end of it, Mafeking smiled still, but smiled with the curled lip of scorn. The convent, notwithstanding its symbol of the Red Cross, had been hit, and crushed, and wrecked; the hospital had been assailed; the sacred claim of humanity had been outraged; women and children had

The Transvaal War

been subjected to terrors of fact and terrors of dread. These atrocities continued, and Her Majesty's long-suffering subjects looked on and waited; they believed that deliverance must soon come. If they had not had that belief to help them, they would have died or surrendered. They believed that a day of reckoning would arrive, and that then Cronje and his diabolical hirelings would come by their deserts. If only they could have skipped six weeks and looked into the mirror of Fate, the drama at Paardeberg Drift would have reassured them. As it was, they had to live in faith. The series of atrocities that marked the Boer assaults had scarcely a counterpart in modern history, and it grew doubtful, if ever their turn should come, whether the besieged would be prevailed upon to emit one spark of that "magnanimity" with which their countrymen had been so lavish, and which the Boer had grown to account as a natural weakness of these "verdomde rooieks."

Siege life was now becoming painfully irksome. A blazing sun, a drenching rain, a gust of wind through the pepper trees, this was all the variety at hand. The inhabitants of the town began to feel like ghosts of themselves, ghouls walking the earth, yet out of touch with those who spoke of them as a memory, and nothing more. To them it was the quiet of the grave. They waited like some enchanted princess of a fairy tale for the time when the magic wand should wave and their pulses throb with joy and excitement, with laughter and zest for the good things of the hour. Now they walked as in a dream to the accompaniment of shot and shell, surrounded by devilish ogres and looters of the dead, while somewhere within a few miles of them, kith and kin, living and breathing kith and kin, seemed as phantoms in a nightmare to pass by and to ignore! A speechless, soundless asphyxia of the soul seemed to be creeping over these tired patient heroes! They still waited and hoped, but hoping and waiting had now grown monotonous, almost mechanical, as the tickings of an eight-day clock.

Rumours many and fantastic were brought in by the natives. It was believed that a new year's gift of three waggon loads of ammunition had been received by the Boers from Pretoria, and also a new gun. This weapon it was afterwards discovered was provided with more combustible bombs, horrible missiles that disgorge a chemical liquid which ignites in contact with the air. Here was a continual horror, and one that was only combated by extreme precautions. Though Colonel Baden-Powell in his nook on the stoep of his house continued to whistle his insouciant notes, his busy brains needed to be Machiavellian in their ingenuity. Some declared he slept with one eye open; others, that he never slept at all. Certain it was that when all were hushed in slumber he was "on the prowl," either on the roof or in the open, reading from



THE MARKET SQUARE, MAFEKING.

The Transvaal War

the heavens above or the earth beneath the enemy's approaching machinations. Some find sermons in stones ; B.-P. found inspiration in sand and sky.

The Boers continued their bombardment, the sun continued to blaze, to smite the tin roofs and glaring sandy roads. After persistently directing shells on the women's laager the ruffians succeeded in murdering three little children. These were of Dutch nationality, and it was hoped that their loss might possibly awaken a feeling of humanity and remorse in the breast of those who had prompted the assault on the defenceless position. But their conduct was rendering those within the town exasperated almost to madness. They panted for a chance to mete out annihilation to the blood-lusting rascals and untamed savages who were harassing them. They did their best, and sat down to the business of clearing off as many as possible of the polyglot horde who worked the guns.

The work done by the Bechuanaland Rifles and the British South Africa Police was prodigious. They shrunk from no toil and no exposure so that they might reduce the number of the besiegers. Early in the New Year the Rifles entrenched themselves within 900 yards of the enemy's big guns, and spent days and nights in the trenches, relieved at intervals by the Police. From nine on one night till nine the next they would occupy their unenviable position, carrying with them their day's food and water, and employing themselves during the hours of light by keeping up a persistent fire on the Boer siege gun. On occasions their fire was so accurate that the Dutchmen had entirely to abandon the work of loading and training the gun. So smart, at last, grew the British sharpshooters, that during each Sabbath the gun was shifted farther and farther away.

Colonel Baden-Powell's resourcefulness was again put to the test, and was again triumphant. The Boers were somewhat non-plussed by the discovery that he had a new weapon of defence. They put their heads together and concluded that the weapon must have sprung from the bowels of the earth. It so happened that in some long-forgotten stores in the town an old ship's gun was suddenly discovered. Quickly it was brought into action. But the ways of this old muzzle-loading 16-pounder were not as the ways of the modern "Long Toms," whose tricks were "understood" of the Boer people. It had curious and distinctive virtues of its own. This gun threw solid shot, which, unlike a shell that bursts and is done with for better or for worse, gallivanted along the ground according to its own sweet will, and produced little surprises that caused the Colonel much amusement and not a little satisfaction.

The biography of the treasure-trove was written by Mr. Angus

Mafeking in December and January

Hamilton of *Black and White*, who declared that there was quite a flutter of excitement at the appearance of the antiquated weapon. "It would seem," he said, "to have been made about 1770, and is identical with those which up till very recently adorned the quay at Portsmouth. Its weight is 8 cwt. 2 qr. 10 lbs., and it was made by B. P. & Co. It is a naval gun, and is stamped 'No. 6 port.' How it came here is uncertain, and its origin unknown; but one gathers that it must have been intended more for privateering than for use in any Government ship of war, since it is wanting in all official superscription. This weapon, which we have now christened 'B. P.' out of a compliment to the Colonel, has been lying upon the farm of an Englishman whose interests are very



GUN MADE IN MAFEKING. Photo by D. Taylor, Mafeking.

closely united with the native tribe whose headquarters are in Mafeking Stadt. Mr. Rowlands can recall the gun passing this way in charge of two Germans nearly forty years ago. He remembers to have seen it in the possession of Linchwe's tribe, and upon his return to the Baralong, after one of his trading journeys, he urged the old chief to secure it for use in defence of the Stadt against the attacks of Dutch freebooters. The chief then visited Linchwe and bought the gun for twenty-two oxen, bringing it down to Mafeking upon his waggon. In those days it had three hundred rounds of ammunition, which were utilised in tribal fights. With the exception of visits which the gun made to local tribes, it has remained here, and is now in the possession of Mr. Rowlands. It

The Transvaal War

has recently been mounted, and is in active operation against our enemies. We have made balls for it, and are intending to manufacture shells, in the hope we shall at least be able to reach the emplacement of Big Ben. The first trial of 'B. P.' in its new career gave very satisfactory results. With two pounds of powder it threw a ball of ten pounds more than two thousand yards. The power of the charge was increased by half pounds until a charge of three pounds threw a ball of the same weight as the first rather more than two miles. We, therefore, have pinned our hopes upon it, and commend to the responsible authorities the reflections which may be derived from the fact that our chief and most efficient means of defence lie in such a weapon."

The mosquito tactics of the wily Colonel proceeded as usual, but the Boer was hard to checkmate. On the 15th of January an attack was made by the sharpshooters against the enemy's big gun battery, with the pleasing result that on the following day the 94-pounder and high-velocity Krupp evacuated their positions, and retired to a more distant one on the east side of the town, whence their command of the place was comparatively limited. In this quarter, now that the foe was pushed out of rifle range, it was possible to open grazing for cattle, a very desirable movement, for the poor lean beasts were waning rapidly. At this time Captain FitzClarence was reported among the convalescents, the wound received on the 26th of December having almost healed.

Preparations were set on foot for the purpose of routing the enemy with dynamite, failing all other means of ridding the town of his too intimate proximity. Colonel Baden-Powell's motto, unlike that of British Governments, was to take time by the forelock. He left nothing to chance. In order to avert any risk of running short of supplies, rations were reduced, and oats which had previously belonged to the beasts were promoted to the use of their owners. Very stringent laws existed for the economising of everything. Matches and tinned milk were commandeered, and the theft of a matchbox was now viewed as a heinous crime. Tobacco in small quantities remained, but wines and spirits were fast running out. There were pathetic leave-takings as each quart of whisky disappeared from the stores; there was no knowing when would arrive the hour for a fond and a last farewell. Conversation grew still more monotonous. It mostly consisted of how the inner man should be sustained, and of anecdotes of agility in avoiding shot and shell.

Still, considerable interest was taken in the performances of the old 16-pounder, which had been rigged up and christened by some "Skipping Polly," on account of its skittish habits and its propensity to ricochet. This, though erratic in its proceedings, did good work,

Mafeking in December and January

and struck the parapet of the enemy's fort. On the 10th of January violent rains came down, and rendered most of the trenches in front of the town uninhabitable, and life in general almost unendurable. Never was there greater need for the inestimable virtues of pluck and patience, and if medals had been awarded for these united qualities, the inhabitants of Mafeking would all have possessed them.

The pinch of siege life now became terribly evident, for the Kaffirs were reduced to eating mules. The British feared their turn at this diet would come directly. But the garrison was still cheery, and their entrenchments were considerably improved. In these Colonel Baden-Powell took a just pride, and his activity in promoting the safety and comfort of the inhabitants was boundless. They declared that they could feed themselves for another three months, but the nature of the form of provision was not divulged. Hardships and privations were endured by the little force with really amazing pluck. Beds they had scarcely enjoyed since the commencement of the siege; baths were almost as foreign, few had had a chance to remove their clothes; and news—the stimulus of the outside world—was entirely lacking. Letters now and then were passed out, but the real truth could never be trusted to black and white.

The office of censor was undertaken by the Hon. A. H. Hanbury Tracy (Royal Horse Guards). His occupation was a hard and a thankless one, for constant vigilance had to be exercised lest reports concerning the inner state of Mafeking—reports most ardently craved by those interested at home—might fall into the hands of the enemy, and thus cramp the operations of Colonel Baden-Powell and those who helped him to present a bold and fearless front to the hovering hordes who were waiting smugly for what they believed to be the inevitable.

On the 17th General Snyman bethought himself of a new way of starving the garrison into surrender. He sent a party of natives to enjoy the hospitality of the already sparsely fed town. It had not a mule to spare for extra Kaffirs, and Colonel Baden-Powell sternly though regretfully refused admittance to the new-comers. According to Boer usage, the officer and orderly who conveyed the message, notwithstanding the fact that they carried a white flag, were fired upon by the enemy while they were returning. A dastardly trick this, and the garrison resented it.

At this time the news of the grand Ladysmith sortie was received with rejoicings, and the bellicose youngsters of the community began to rack fertile brains in hope to emulate the courage and dash of the sister garrison. On this day a shell hit the shelter occupied by Major Baillie and Mr. Stent, Reuter's correspondent, and portions crashed through Dixon's Hotel, but fortunately without injuring any one.

The Transvaal War

News now reached the benighted villagers that Colonel Plumer, with three armoured trains, had actually reached Gaberones, some three hundred miles north of Mafeking. The troops had some sharp tussles with the Boers, and drove them out of rifle range while the railway operatives mended the line. Where Colonel Plumer's three trains came from was a mystery. He was known to have *one*, but there was no saying of what Rhodesia might not be capable in time of stress. Colonel Plumer had his work cut out for him, but he was not a man to sheer off difficult tasks, and there was intense hope that he might succeed. But there was always the Boer artillery—a terrible barrier between the relieving force and Mafeking—and in the face of this even the finest warriors, almost gunless, could scarcely be expected to advance alive.

On the 19th of January the small community celebrated the 100th day of the siege. All the corners of the square had been knocked off by the ever-active Boers, but the village maintained a suitable air of liveliness. Exhibitions were arranged, and some smart fighting showed that the right arm of the British had lost none of its cunning.

There were fat days and lean days in Mafeking. Though for the most part leanness prevailed, there was now and then to be found an oasis in the desert of the commissariat. Occasionally some successful raid made by the natives was productive of real meals—succulent beef *versus* old mule and husks. In the course of one daring foray the natives secured two dozen head of cattle; in another they carried off prizes of fat kine to the tune of a score. The excursions took place under cover of darkness, and, like all raids, were pursued without the consent of the Government. The natives had a process peculiarly their own in seducing the fat kine to follow them home. Devoid of clothing, and crawling snake-like over the veldt, they would approach the grazing cattle and gradually draw off such beasts as appeared goodly in their eyes, and which had been previously marked down with the acuteness of hungry instinct. Noiselessly the animals were enticed on and on till they reached the precincts of the staadt, where the raiders were anxiously looked for by their Baralong friends. These famishing individuals greeted the successful capture of the wherewithal to maintain life with shouts and dances of joy.

The garrison was soon put on a scale of still more reduced rations. These consisted of half a pound of meat and the same of bread daily. The luxuries of life—the people in England looked on them as necessities!—tea, sugar, biscuits, jams, &c., were commandeered. In January the following housekeeper's notes were made by the correspondent of the *Times*:—"Meal and flour have jumped from 27s. per bag to 50s.; potatoes, where they exist at

Mafeking in December and January

all, are £2 per cwt.; fowls are 7s. 6d. each; and eggs 12s. per dozen. Milk and vegetables can no longer be obtained, and rice has taken the place of the latter upon the menus. These figures mark the rise in the more important food-stuffs as sold across the counter, but the hotels have, in sympathy, followed the example, they upon their part attributing it to the increase which the wholesale merchants have decreed. A peg of whisky is 1s. 6d., dop brandy 1s., gin 1s., large stout is 4s., small beer 2s. In ordinary times whisky retails at 5s. per bottle. This rate has now advanced to 18s. per bottle and 80s. per case. Dop, which is usually 1s. 4d., is now 12s. per bottle; the difference upon beer is almost 200 per cent., and inferior cigarettes are now 18s. per 100."

On the good management of the contractors, Messrs. Weil & Co., every one depended for flesh and blood. On them rested the responsibility of issuing daily rations—bread and meat for the garrison, forage for horses, and food for natives—and very excellently they fulfilled their difficult task.

On the 21st an unusual sort of show was held. The exhibits ranged from foals to babies, Mr. Minchin (Bechuanaland Rifles) securing first prize for the former, while Sergeant Brady, B.S.A.P., was the proud winner of the prize for the latter.

Colonel Baden-Powell sent a despatch reporting his own doings at the end of January to Colonel Nicholson. It ran as follows:—

"Inform the Commanding Staff Officer that we are well here. On January 23 the enemy moved their north-east supporting laager to within 4500 yards of the town. We pushed our advance works in that direction, and mounted Lord Nelson, an old naval smooth-bore gun, in an emplacement 3100 yards from the enemy. On the evening of January 29 we unmasked our guns and shelled the enemy's camp with complete success. Next morning the Boer laager was moved back two miles.

"On the 31st we were busy on all sides of the town. On the south the men in our advance works had a skirmish with three of the enemy's Krupp and Maxim guns, the firing being very heavy. A bombardment of our front on Cannon Kopje by the Boer 94-pounder followed. On the east front our four guns replied to this by a concentrated fire on the brickfield entrenchments, where the enemy poured in a musketry and artillery fire.

"On the north the enemy's 5-pounders kept up a steady fire. They dropped one shell through the roof of the hospital, but luckily it did not explode. On the west the enemy, from their advanced works, opened a heavy rifle and Maxim fire on Fort Ayr, which our fort eventually silenced by the well-aimed fire of its guns. The enemy sent three big shells into the town after dark, but they gained nothing during the day.

"Our casualties during the past two days from the enemy's shell fire have been three killed and three wounded. Mr. Kiddy, of the Railway Department, has died of fever.

"On February 2 General Snyman, in reply to my letter with regard to his deliberately shelling the women and children's laagers on the 27th ult., offered no excuse or apology, and by a transparent falsehood practically admits that

The Transvaal War

he ordered it. I have told him that I have now established temporary premises for the Boer prisoners in the women's laager and in the hospital, in order to protect these places from deliberate shelling."

General Snyman and Colonel Baden-Powell had also a correspondence regarding Snyman's arming and raising of natives. In reply the old commandant said that he had merely armed the natives as cattle-guards. In his turn he complained that the British had been seen making fortifications on Sunday. The Colonel, who only relaid some mine wires, informed him that he had himself been entertained by watching the building of new fortifications by the Boers on that day.

On the 25th of January a shell burst through the convent, which was used as a convalescent hospital, and slightly wounded Lady Sarah Wilson, who had taken upon herself the care of the invalids. On the following day the women's laager was continuously shelled, but fortunately with small result. There was general jubilation at reports received regarding the success of Lord Roberts' operations. The news was an immense stimulus, and speculation as to the date of relief was freely indulged in. The besieged had learnt to gather hope from the smallest incidents. The disappearance from time to time of the 5-pounder Krupp, the 1-pounder Maxim, the 9-pounder quick-firing Creusot, which had a trick of making weekly excursions somewhere—caused them to conjecture whether Colonel Plumer had reached a point where these pieces could be made to come in handy. The 100-pounder Creusot, however, was untiring. It engaged only in shorter peregrinations, moving from one emplacement to another by way of variety, and keeping up a system of torture which acted badly on the nerves of the unhappy persons who were honoured with its attentions.

The following telegram, forwarded by runner from the Mayor of Mafeking (Mr. Whiteley), was addressed to Queen Victoria: "Mafeking upon the hundredth day of siege sends loyal devotion to your Majesty, and assurance of continued resolve to maintain your Majesty's supremacy in this town." The splendid little garrison had indeed a right to be proud of itself for having for so long a period held at bay a puissant and spiteful foe. It had fought, it had schemed, it had set its wits against the wits of Cronje and his successors, and defied them magnificently. "No surrender" was its motto, and the reply from the enemy was stamped on every house of this minute town—so minute that it could have been "stowed within the railings of St. James' Park"—and scribbled in large black defacing lines wherever shot and shell could penetrate. Some idea of life's daily accompaniment of artillery may be arrived at by reading a description of his experiences recounted by Mr. Neilly of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. He

Mafeking in December and January

said :—" When the enemy's artillery began to send us the heavy ration, those who knew most about the power of modern long-range high-velocity arms dreaded most the consequences. At the advice of our commander-in-chief, we went to earth, some into dug-outs, I, with others, into the wine-cellar of the hotel, which I consider was the most comfortable and luxurious place in the town. After breakfast a twelve-pounder on the heights went ' Boom ! ' Where had the shell gone ? Had it struck a house ? Had the building collapsed ? Would the town be flattened and set on fire when the whole battery came into action ? We speculated so until the second boom sounded, and the third quickly followed. Himmel ! We had got it, and what a crash it was ! Something had given way, and *débris* and shrapnel scattered like a hailstorm across the dining-room floor overhead. While some calmed the ladies, others of us doubled up through the trapdoor, slid the panel that divides the bar from the dining-room, and looked in. The dense smoke of the bursting charge filled the place, but there was nothing to indicate that anything was aflame. When the air cleared slightly we entered, to find the floor and tables littered with brick-dust and scrap iron ; but the area of destruction was confined to the brick-work at the side of the window. Nothing was stirred upon the tables, which were laid for luncheon. That was enough. Had the house been built of good tough English brick, its flank would have probably collapsed ; the rottenness of the walls had saved them ; the rottenness of all the houses would bring about comparative safety to the town. Solids struck by shell add to the destruction wrought by the projectile through flying splinters ; but there is no use in trying to batter sand stuck together with water. The concussion sends off the detonator, the burst makes a hole in the wall, and the further results are an untidied room and a bad fright to anybody who may be in it."

The writer, like the rest of the plucky crew, talked airily of the ordeal that all passed through, without a single boast of the splendid effect of the garrison's doughty resistance to the enemy in the early phases of the war.

It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the full importance of this magnificent defence at that time. As an object-lesson in British pluck, and the marvellous celerity with which peace-loving citizens may become glorious fighters, the defence as a whole stands without parallel. But from a political point of view the initial stoutness of the resistance was a *coup* which had far-reaching results.

There is no doubt that at the outset of the war a conspiracy was on foot between the Cape Dutch and the Federals, and that the capture of certain towns was to be taken as a signal for the joining of the allies to drive the British from South

The Transvaal War

Africa. It was thought that the apparently insignificant village of Mafeking would be among the first to fall, and the conspirators congratulated themselves that once the place went under, the door to Rhodesia would fly open. The gallant Cronje, with nothing better to occupy him, could have worked his way north, attacked Colonel Plumer and his small force, and without doubt defeated them. He would then have proceeded on a triumphal march. Having intimidated the natives, who invariably back the man with the visible biceps, and having armed the Matabele and Mashonas, he would have completely swept and devastated the fair country of the Colossus before our troops could have had time to save it from ruin. How far the ruin would have spread it is difficult to say. Like dynamite, it would have struck upwards and downwards, north and south. The capture of Mafeking would have unhinged the native population there, and forced them to side with the Boers; and once the natives got under arms the situation would have become so complicated that it might have taken years to unravel, if indeed the Government had the patience to unravel it at all.

Then disaffection would have spread rapidly, even to Table Bay. Had Cronje at the outset not been kept tied to the place, occupied in trying to crack the nut which he eventually found too hard for his own teeth and for the sledge-hammer weapons of his mercenaries, he would have gone on from town to town gathering up adherents as he went, and causing intimidation of such a kind that even the loyally disposed would in sheer self-defence have thrown in their lot with him.

CHAPTER III

AT POPLAR GROVE

BEFORE going on, it must be noted that on the 19th Lord Roberts had issued a proclamation to the Burghers of the Free State in English and Dutch. He said that the British having entered the Free State, he felt it his duty to make known the cause, and to do his utmost to end the war. Should the Free Staters continue fighting, they would do so in full knowledge of their responsibility for the lives lost in the campaign. Before the war, the Imperial Government desired the friendship of the Free State, and solemnly assured President Steyn that if he remained neutral the Free State territory would not be invaded and its independence would be respected. Nevertheless, the Free Staters had wantonly and unjustifiably invaded British territory, though the Imperial Government believed that the Free State Government was wholly responsible, under mischievous outside influence, for this invasion.

The Imperial Government bore the people no ill-will, and was anxious to preserve them from the evils which the action of their Government had caused. Lord Roberts warned the Burghers to desist from further hostilities, and he undertook that Burghers so desisting should not suffer in their persons or property. Requisitions of food, forage, fuel, and shelter must be complied with. Everything would be paid for on the spot, and if supplies were refused they would be taken, a receipt being given. Should the inhabitants consider that they had been unjustly treated, and should their complaint on inquiry be substantiated, redress would be given. In conclusion, Lord Roberts stated that British soldiers were prohibited from entering houses or molesting the civil population.

By the terms of this proclamation it was necessary to abide, though, by degrees, as will be seen, it began to be discovered that generous concessions made to our enemies were misinterpreted and taken advantage of in ways which tended to prolong the war.

Lords Roberts and Kitchener paid a flying visit to Kimberley on the 1st of March, and attended a crowded meeting in the Town Hall. Lord Roberts, with his usual grace, dwelt on the courage, endurance, and heroism exhibited by the troops and residents, not only in Kimberley, but in the other besieged towns.

Cronje's fate being sealed, the Field-Marshal shifted his head-

The Transvaal War

quarters to Ofontein, seven miles up the Modder from Paardeberg. Near here it was rumoured that such Boers as had failed to come to the succour of Cronje had flocked. These, numbering some 10,000, had gathered at the summons of their chief from the regions round Stormberg, Colesberg, and Ladysmith, and were now busily entrenching a position some fifteen miles long. Of this the flanks rested on kopjes to the south of the river on a group called Seven Sisters, and to the north across the river on a flat-topped kopje, behind which were further fortified kopjes, forming a formidable position at Poplar Grove, a place so called because of a sparse display of poplar and Australian gum-trees in the vicinity.

At this time the two Presidents of the Republics, finding things getting too hot to be comfortable, made magnanimous proposals for peace. The following is the text of their despatch.

"BLOEMFONTEIN, *March 5, 1900.*

"The blood and the tears of the thousands who have suffered by this war, and the prospect of all the moral and economic ruin with which South Africa is now threatened, make it necessary for both belligerents to ask themselves dispassionately, and as in the sight of the Triune God, for what they are fighting, and whether the aim of each justifies all this appalling misery and devastation.

"With this object, and in view of the assertions of various British statesmen, to the effect that this war was begun and is being carried on with the set purpose of undermining Her Majesty's authority in South Africa, and of setting up an Administration over all South Africa independent of Her Majesty's Government, we consider it our duty solemnly to declare that this war was undertaken solely as a defensive measure to safeguard the threatened independence of the South African Republic, and is only continued in order to secure and safeguard the incontestable independence of both Republics as sovereign international States, and to obtain the assurance that those of Her Majesty's subjects who have taken part with us in this war shall suffer no harm whatsoever in person or property.

"On these conditions, but on these conditions alone, are we now, as in the past, desirous of seeing peace re-established in South Africa, and of putting an end to the evils now reigning over South Africa; while, if Her Majesty's Government is determined to destroy the independence of the Republics, there is nothing left to us and to our people but to persevere to the end in the course already begun, in spite of the overwhelming pre-eminence of the British Empire, confident that that God who lighted the unextinguishable fire of the love of freedom in the hearts of ourselves and of our fathers will not forsake us, but will accomplish His work in us and in our descendants.

"We hesitated to make this declaration earlier to your Excellency, as we feared that as long as the advantage was always on our side, and as long as our forces held defensive positions far in Her Majesty's Colonies, such a declaration might hurt the feelings of honour of the British people; but now that the prestige of the British Empire may be considered to be assured by the capture of one of our forces by Her Majesty's troops, and that we are thereby forced to evacuate other positions which our forces had occupied, that difficulty is over, and we can no longer hesitate clearly to inform your Government and people, in



SHELL FROM THE NAVAL BRIGADE DISPERSING BOERS FROM BEHIND THE SEVEN SISTERS KOPJES, DURING THE ACTION OF 7th MARCH AT LE GALLAIS KOPJE, NEAR OSFONTEIN.

Drawing by Sidney Paget, from a Sketch by W. B. Wollen, R.I.

At Poplar Grove

the sight of the whole civilised world, why we are fighting, and on what conditions we are ready to restore peace."

The answer to this effusion, addressed by Lord Salisbury on behalf of Her Majesty's Government to the Presidents, ran :—

"FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 11, 1900.*

"I have the honour to acknowledge your Honours' telegram, dated March 5, from Bloemfontein, of which the purport is principally to demand that Her Majesty's Government shall recognise the 'incontestable independence' of the South African Republic and Orange Free State as 'sovereign international States,' and to offer, on those terms, to bring the war to a conclusion.

"In the beginning of October last, peace existed between Her Majesty and the two Republics under the Conventions which then were in existence. A discussion had been proceeding for some months between Her Majesty's Government and the South African Republic, of which the object was to obtain redress for certain very serious grievances under which British residents in the South African Republic were suffering. In the course of these negotiations, the South African Republic had, to the knowledge of Her Majesty's Government, made considerable armaments, and the latter had, consequently, taken steps to provide corresponding reinforcements to the British garrisons of Cape Town and Natal. No infringement of the rights guaranteed by the Conventions had, up to that point, taken place on the British side. Suddenly, at two days' notice, the South African Republic, after issuing an insulting ultimatum, declared war upon Her Majesty; and the Orange Free State, with whom there had not even been any discussion, took a similar step. Her Majesty's dominions were immediately invaded by the two Republics, siege was laid to three towns within the British frontier, a large portion of the two Colonies was overrun, with great destruction to property and life, and the Republics claimed to treat the inhabitants of extensive portions of Her Majesty's dominions as if those dominions had been annexed to one or other of them. In anticipation of these operations the South African Republic had been accumulating for many years past military stores on an enormous scale, which, by their character, could only have been intended for use against Great Britain.

"Your Honours make some observations of a negative character upon the object with which these preparations were made. I do not think it necessary to discuss the questions you have raised. But the result of these preparations, carried on with great secrecy, has been that the British Empire has been compelled to confront an invasion which has entailed upon the Empire a costly war and the loss of thousands of precious lives. This great calamity has been the penalty which Great Britain has suffered for having in recent years acquiesced in the existence of the two Republics.

"In view of the use to which the two Republics have put the position which was given to them, and the calamities which their unprovoked attack has inflicted upon Her Majesty's dominions, Her Majesty's Government can only answer your Honours' telegram by saying that they are not prepared to assent to the independence either of the South African Republic or of the Orange Free State."

To return to Osofontein. There was now a short and much-needed interval of repose, in which men and horses tried to recuperate. It was, however, necessary for the cavalry to be continually scouring the country to ascertain the whereabouts of the enemy.

The Transvaal War

On the 6th of March Lord Roberts welcomed the Ceylon Mounted Infantry, and sent the following telegram to Sir West Ridgeway, Governor of Ceylon:—"I have just ridden out to meet Ceylon Mounted Infantry, and welcome them to this force. They look most workmanlike, and are a valuable addition to Her Majesty the Queen's army in South Africa." These troops were in excellent condition, so also were their handy Burma ponies, smart, knowing, and game little beasts, warranted to turn on a sixpence and stand any amount of wear and tear.

On the same day the Colonials had a smart set-to with the Dutchmen, who were endeavouring to locate themselves in the vicinity, and the New Zealanders and Australians made themselves more than a match for the Boers, losing themselves only six wounded, while they put ten of the enemy out of action. The rest of the gang disappeared, on the principle of those who fight and run away live to fight another day. In fact, they moved to some strong eminences that commanded either side of the river, the centre of the position being at Poplar Grove Farm. Here the Federals thought to embarrass the British advance, but Lord Roberts decided to undeceive them. The Field-Marshal's plan was now to turn their left flank with the cavalry division, and then to meet their line of defence with the infantry divisions, and thus enclose them as Cronje had been enclosed.

Accordingly the troops got themselves into battle array. The Naval Brigade brought their 4.7 guns four miles north-east of Ofontein, while the cavalry prepared to turn the Boer left, and started before daybreak of the 7th to accomplish this feat. On the north bank was left the Ninth Division with some handy Colonials and guns. Moving to the east were the Sixth and Seventh Divisions, with the Guards Brigade in the centre.

The dawn grew. The Boers in the golden rays of morning were disclosed massed in the far front, and later was seen the glorious mass of French's cavalry sweeping south—a martial broom which the Boers began to know meant business.

At eight o'clock the music of battle started, the Naval guns on one side and the batteries of General French on the other. Lyddite and shrapnel bounced and spluttered over all the small kopjes wherein the Dutchmen had made a lodgment. It was sufficient. The Boer guns spat impotently—the puling cry of dismay—then, knowingly, the Federals made preparations for a stampede. They saw in the distance the Sixth Division advancing, the Colonials cleaving the columns of dust, the Highland Brigade coming on and on, their dark kilts cutting a thin line across the atmosphere—they saw enough! To east they flew, speeding towards Bloemfontein—guns, waggons, horsemen—as arrows from the bow, and leaving behind them their

At Poplar Grove

well-constructed trenches, their ammunition, tents, and supplies. After them went the Colonials and City Imperial Volunteers, all keen sportsmen, exhilarated with the heat of the chase, but the Boers were uncatchable. No one has yet beaten them in the art of running away. Nevertheless, Lord Roberts was left in undisturbed possession of Poplar Grove. In the early afternoon the Boers certainly endeavoured to make one futile, feeble stand, but their effort was unavailing, and by sunset they were careering into space, while the cavalry vainly endeavoured to hem them in. Horse-flesh had come to the end of its tether; poor food and much galloping had reduced the noble steeds to helpless wrecks, and unfortunately the manœuvres of Paardeberg could not be repeated. Curiously enough, though no Boers were caught, the military net was full of strange fish, a Russian, a Hollander, a German all being left in the lurch. It was a humorous episode. While the Boers were making off as fast as legs—the mounts of some had been shot—and horses could carry them, a dilapidated country cart, surmounted by a red flag, was seen to be approaching. From this cart presently emerged several forlorn personages, looking very sorry for themselves indeed. They accounted for their plight by saying that while the final fight was taking place their mule-waggon had broken down. The mules having been unloosed, promptly stampeded, and left them between two fires, that of the Boers (to whom they were attached) and the British. The name of one foreigner, in dark blue uniform, was Colonel Prince Gourko, of the Russian army; the other, attired in plain clothes, was Lieutenant Thomson, of the Netherlands (Military Attaché of the Boers). With them was a German servant in attendance on the Russian prince. Finding themselves in an uncomfortable quandary, one from which there was no escape, they decided to join the British. They were introduced to Lord Kitchener, and thereupon presented to the Commander-in-Chief, who received them with his usual courtesy.

Lord Roberts, telegraphing home in the afternoon, thus described the day's work:—

“OSFONTEIN, *March 7* (4.30 P.M.).

“March 7.—Our operations to-day promise to be a great success.

“The enemy occupied a position four miles north and eleven miles south of Modder River.

“I placed Colville's division on north bank; Kelly-Kenny's and Tucker's, with cavalry division, on south bank.

“The cavalry division succeeded in turning the left flank, opening the road for 6th Division, which is advancing without having been obliged to fire a shot up to present time (twelve noon).

“Enemy are in full retreat toward north and east, being closely followed by cavalry, horse-artillery, and mounted infantry, while the 7th (Tucker's) and 9th (Colville's) divisions, and Guards Brigade, under Pole-Carew, are making

The Transvaal War

their way across the river at Poplar's Drift, where I propose to place my headquarters this evening."

Later on the Commander-in-Chief wired from the said headquarters:—

"POPLAR GROVE, *March 7 (7.35 P.M.).*

"We have had a very successful day and completely routed the enemy, who are in full retreat.

"The position they occupied was extremely strong, and cunningly arranged with a second line of entrenchments, which would have caused us heavy loss had a direct attack been made.

"The turning movement was necessarily wide owing to the nature of the ground, and the cavalry and horse-artillery horses are much done up.

"The fighting was practically confined to the cavalry division, which, as usual, did exceedingly well, and French reports that the horse-artillery batteries did a great deal of execution amongst the enemy.

"Our casualties number about fifty.

"I regret to say that Lieutenant Keswick, 12th Lancers, was killed, and Lieutenant Bailey, of the same regiment, severely wounded. Lieutenant De Crespigny, 2nd Life Guards, also severely wounded."

Though the state of the cavalry was deplorable, it was thanks to the splendid execution of General French that the Boers showed so little fight, and there were so few casualties. The enemy saw the cavalry menacing their line of retreat, and pelted off from kopje to kopje, now and then sniping at the leading squadrons, and occasionally plumping a shell or two into the British midst. With the Dutchmen, Presidents Steyn and Kruger were said to be, and these worthies made a desperate attempt to rally the forces, but without success. Some say they even shed tears to encourage their countrymen, which tears had evidently a damping effect, for the Boers—some 14,000 of them—retreated all the faster. They were absolutely demoralised by Lord Roberts' tactics, and felt seriously injured that the trenches which had been prepared against a frontal attack should have been ignored. They had been so accustomed to be attacked in front that they began to look upon the Commander-in-Chief's "roundabout way of doing things" as distinctly unfair. They took themselves off, and when General French, who advanced ten miles ahead of the main body, scoured the front, he reported that not a Boer was to be seen. A vast amount of ammunition was left behind, and this, including several boxes of explosive bullets, labelled "Manufactured for the British Government," was promptly destroyed.

Good news now arrived. The A and B squadrons of Kitchener's Horse, reported missing, suddenly returned to camp at Paardeberg. They, with E squadron, were cut off on the 13th of February, and given up for lost. Though E squadron was captured by the enemy, A and B squadrons succeeded in escaping, and, after losing their

The Fight at Driefontein

bearings on the veldt, and enduring three weeks' somewhat unpleasant experiences, found their way into safety.

Quantities of the Transvaalers disbanded and returned to their farms. In other quarters, too, progress was announced. General Gatacre occupied Burghersdorp and General Clements had reached Norval's Pont, and thus the sporadic rebellion in Cape Colony was slowly beginning to die out.

The army advanced and formed a fresh camp beyond Poplar Grove, where on the 8th and 9th more of the troops concentrated. The force was now moving through a fine grassy country, made additionally green and refreshing by plentiful rains, and the horses were improving in condition and spirits, while the men were in first-rate fettle.

On the 10th of March the army proceeded onwards. By this time the Boers had posted themselves on the kopjes eight miles south of Abraham's Drift. It was imagined that they would be able to offer little resistance to the advancing force, but they, however, made a very determined stand.

THE FIGHT AT DRIEFONTEIN

On leaving Poplar Grove, Lord Roberts' force, rearranged and divided into three, advanced on Bloemfontein *via* Driefontein, a place about six miles south-west of Abraham's Kraal and some forty miles from the capital of the Free State. Along the Petrusberg Road, to the right, moved General Tucker's division, with the Gordons and a cavalry brigade. The central column, composed of General Colville's division, the Guards Brigade (General Pole-Carew), and Colonel Broadwood's brigade of cavalry, accompanied Lord Roberts, while on the left, advancing along the Modder River, was General French with Colonel Porter's cavalry brigade and General Kelly-Kenny's division. The ranks had been filled up by detachments from the Modder and Kimberley, which latter place had been converted into the advanced depot. Among the additional troops were the Ceylon Mounted Rifles, a soldierly lot and much admired by those who saw them. At 10 A.M. the brigade of cavalry under Colonel Broadwood, which was marching in advance of the central column, came in touch with the enemy. Their position was a strong one, an open, crescent-shaped group of kopjes, with the centre a plateau, dropping on all sides to flat ground. At the extreme end of the semicircle (on the crescent at the north-east) was posted a formidable gun, and this weapon, perched on a commanding kopje at Abraham's Kraal, protected the position from advance from the north-west. It also provided the Republicans with a loophole for escape. Colonel Broadwood had no sooner discovered the enemy

The Transvaal War

in his snake-shaped array of kopjes than he commenced to shell him and drive him forth from the lower projections of the position. That done, he there planted his mounted infantry till reinforcements should come to his aid.

On the right Colonel Porter had now come in contact with the foe. General French's orders were to avoid imbroglio with the enemy and to keep in touch with the centre. On a message being



DIRECTING AN ARMY FROM A MILITARY BALLOON.

sent by Colonel Porter to inform General French of the presence of the Dutchmen, the infantry division changed its course. They now marched twenty miles to the south, reaching the position about one o'clock. The march was an achievement. Twenty miles across the blistering, blinding veldt, as a commencement to a fighting day six hours in length, was a feat of endurance of which the infantry division might well have been proud. The change of course had

The Fight at Driefontein

the effect of avoiding the necessity to attack Abraham's Kraal, though at the same time it unfortunately left open the enemy's line of retreat to the north, which, later on, he was not slow to make use of. With the arrival of General French's force, Colonel Broadwood was free to continue his movement to the left of the enemy's position, and working round it, found himself assailed by the 9-pounder of the enemy. He nevertheless pursued his course, gaining ground very slowly but surely, and by nightfall the brigade of cavalry had worked eight miles to the rear of the Dutchmen's position. This flanking movement, though not concluded at dusk, resulted in the eventual retirement of the enemy.

Meanwhile in the centre of the plateau hot fighting was taking place, General Kelly-Kenny's division having made a bold attack on the north of the stronghold, whence the troops were greeted from behind a screen of boulders with a storm of shot and shell. The Dutchmen, safe and invisible, could not, however, succeed in arresting the dogged advance of the Welsh Regiment, who formed the first line of the attacking force. They went on and on despite the fierce fusillade of the Federals, their numbers growing momentarily thinner, but their nerve and perseverance showing no diminution. The Boers, ingenious as ever, offered a skilful and stubborn resistance, pouring a heavy enfilading fire from kopjes both east and south-west, while they plied two 12-pounders with intense vigour.

From the south now came the artillery, T Battery R.H.A. sweeping the way for the infantry advance. But they had no easy task. Before they could get into action the Vickers-Maxim of the Federals commenced its deadly activities, and while the gunners were unlimbering killed first one man then another, and laid low several horses. But the brave artillerymen undauntedly pursued their work, and presently, with the loss of very few minutes, exchanged hearty greetings with the weapon which had wrought such havoc among their numbers. At this time U Battery, at the north of the Boer centre, was active, but later on, when the 76th Field Battery moved towards the enemy with a view to clearing a way for the rush of the infantry, U Battery joined T, and together they blazed away at the ridges held by the Dutchmen. But throughout the whole period they pursued their work under showers which unceasingly rained down from the rifles of the foe. Meanwhile the Welsh Regiment, supported by the Essex and Gloucesters, moved on and on till they reached the shelter of the crest of the ridge. Here, at 500 yards range, a crackling concert of musketry was heard, the Boers firing with great ferocity and stubbornness, the British with coolness and accuracy. From the centre of the position the Yorks, supported by the Buffs, did mag-

The Transvaal War

nificent work, and they, together with the Essex Regiment, later on in the afternoon began doggedly to ascend towards the stone sangars of the enemy, which yet vomited forks of flame.

Now they crawled and now they wormed themselves along through the grass, dripping with gore and covered with sweat, many of their officers gone, comrades dropping to right and to left of them, while the fire of the enemy continued to rattle down in their midst. Then, as the fusillade slackened, they leapt up and made for the ridge, taking it, going over the crest with glittering steel and ringing cheer, and finding not one single Boer had awaited their coming. The Dutchmen had vanished into thin air! It was a magnificent deed—the finest that had been witnessed for a long time—but it was dearly paid for. The way was paved to Bloemfontein, but with the corpses of the honoured dead. The brunt of the fighting fell on the Sixth Division, more particularly on the Welsh and Essex Regiments, the Ninth Division, with the Guards, arriving too late in the day to take part in the fight. A great number of officers were put out of action—so many, indeed, that some of the leading companies were led, and admirably led, by their colour-sergeants. A characteristic feature of the engagement was the Dutchmen's slim and ingenious mode of firing a big gun from amid a group of red houses, each floating a white flag, an arrangement which served to cover the retirement of the enemy, and on the success of which he doubtless complimented himself not a little.

At dusk a splendid sight was visible. In the last glimmer of day Lord Roberts and his staff entered the central plateau, followed by degrees by all the troops—an imposing force, which evidently determined the Boers in their resolution to make themselves scarce. This they did, guns included, with really creditable and surprising rapidity. They were much disheartened by defeat, however, and though they had offered most stubborn resistance, the character of their defence was lacking in evidence of the determination which had hitherto been noticeable. Among the mortally wounded was the gallant officer commanding the Royal Australian Artillery, Colonel Umphelby.¹ The Boers lost over 100, but the list of our own killed and wounded was a long one. Amongst the killed were:—Captain Eustace, the Buffs; Lieutenant Parsons and Second Lieutenant Coddington, Essex Regiment; Captain Lomax, Welsh Regi-

¹ Lieutenant-Colonel C. E. E. Umphelby, who died of the wounds which he received during the fight, was forty-six years of age. He commanded the Victorian portion of the Royal Australian Regiment of Artillery. He joined the Victorian Militia Garrison Artillery in 1884, and in the following year was appointed lieutenant in the Permanent Artillery. He was promoted to be captain in 1888, major in 1891, and lieutenant-colonel in 1897. Sent to England by the Victorian Government in 1889, he passed through various artillery courses, including the long course at Shoeburyness. Lieutenant-Colonel Umphelby was attached to the staff of Major-General M. Clarke at Aldershot from June to August 1890. See vol. iii., "Victoria."

The Fight at Driefontein

ment ; Mr. McKartie, a retired Indian civilian attached to Kitchener's Horse. Wounded—Colonel Hickson, the Buffs, Lieutenant Ronald, the Buffs ; Captain Jordan, Gloucesters ; Second Lieutenant Torkington, Welsh Regiment ; Second Lieutenant Pope, Welsh Regiment ; Second Lieutenant Wimberley, Welsh Regiment ; Captain Broadmead, Essex Regiment ; Lieutenant Devenish, Royal Field Artillery ; Major Waite, Royal Army Medical Corps ; Lieutenant Berne, Royal Army Medical Corps ; Colonel Umphelby, Royal Australian Artillery (since dead) ; Lieutenant C. Berkeley and Second Lieutenant Lloyd, Welsh Regiment ; Second Lieutenant G. H. Raleigh, Essex Regiment.

The Australians came in for a heavy share of the fighting. The 1st Australian Horse, brigaded with the Scots Greys, were fiercely fired on by the enemy as they advanced to within 800 yards of the wide bend of kopjes. The New South Wales Mounted Infantry, under Colonel Knight, and the Mounted Rifles, under Captain Antill, engaged in animated pursuit of the enemy as they fled towards the north, their fleet horses showing a marked contrast in condition to the jaded steeds of the English cavalry.

Lord Roberts expressed his satisfaction at the brilliant work performed by the Welsh Regiment in the storming of Alexander Kopje, a feat in which they displayed consummate skill as well as amazing pluck. Some heroic actions took place during the day, particularly in connection with the supply of ammunition, which ran short owing to the necessity of relieving the infantry for their heavy march, of fifty rounds apiece. Some dastardly ones were also practised by the Boers, who, finding themselves in a perilous situation, the artillery in front and a squadron of mounted infantry hovering on their flank, hoisted a white flag and threw up their hands in token of surrender. Naturally the British accepted the sign, and, while they were approaching the Dutchmen, some others of their number hastened to pour a volley into the British ranks. Lord Roberts himself having been a witness of this treacherous act, remonstrated with the Boer leaders, and ordered that in future if such action were repeated the white flag should be utterly disregarded. The following protest was made by the Commander-in-Chief :—

“To their Honours the State Presidents of the Orange Free State and South African Republic.

“Another instance having occurred of a gross abuse of the white flag, and of the signal of holding up the hands in token of surrender, it is my duty to inform your Honours that if such abuse occurs again, I shall most reluctantly be compelled to order my troops to disregard the white flag entirely.

“The instance occurred on the kopje east of Driefontein Farm yesterday evening, and was witnessed by several of my own staff-officers as well as by myself, and resulted in the wounding of several of my officers and men.

“A large quantity of explosive bullets of three different kinds was

The Transvaal War

found in Cronje's laager, and after every engagement with your Honours' troops.

"Such breaches of the recognised usages of war and of the Geneva Convention are a disgrace to any civilised Power.

"A copy of this telegram has been sent to my Government, with a request that it may be communicated to all neutral Powers."

The Boers had now entirely disappeared. It was nevertheless hinted that they might be collecting in some new and unexpected region. The column, however, resumed its victorious march, proceeding twelve miles without coming upon the enemy. The beating of yesterday had produced a good effect, for the Dutchmen kept their distance, though in the kopjes all along the direct road to Bloemfontein, which lay due east, they were said to be swarming. It was also reported that Transvaalers and Free Staters had fallen out, and that the former, under Joubert, were determined to make a stand behind a magnificent entrenchment that they had built. The advance was supposed to come from the west, and consequently the Boer line of entrenchments extended some six or eight miles from the town facing towards Bam's Vlei. There were shelter trenches, made not on the kopjes, but about a hundred yards out on the plain beneath. They used sandbags, and had gun epaulements besides. In addition to all this, they had made sangars and piles of stones on the kopjes. Unfortunately for them, our troops made a cunning detour, which again dislocated the Dutchmen's programme, and forced them in their mountain fastnesses to sit inactive, while the cavalry was wheeling south to the outskirts of Bloemfontein! Here there were no fortifications and very few Boers.

Mr. Steyn now secretly left Bloemfontein for Kroonstad, as, in spite of Mr. Kruger's representations, it had been decided to surrender the capital of the Free State. Lord Roberts, who had sent in a formal demand for surrender, received no reply. General Joubert made preparations, with some 3000 men, to avert the surrender, but his approach, veritably at the eleventh hour, was barred by the clever manœuvres of the British. This splendid piece of work was executed by Major Hunter-Weston, R.E. He was sent by General French to cut the railway north of Bloemfontein, and thus preclude any chance of Boer interruption to the triumphal progress into the town. In the dead of night the Major, with seven men of the field-troop, all mounted on picked horses (a precaution that was very necessary considering the hard work done by the troops both before and after the relief of Kimberley), started on their hazardous expedition. Darkness cramped, though it cloaked their movements, and the ground over which they sped was seamed with dongas and many impediments; and, moreover, a wide sweep had to be made to avoid Boer pickets. Before the peep o' day they

The Fight at Driefontein

reached their destination. Then they began to search for a place suitable for demolition. They came on a culvert supported with iron girders, one of which was hastily but cautiously prepared by placing two 10-lb. charges of gun-cotton against the web, which was fired within twenty minutes. Then, with a detonation that seemed to shake the day into dawning, the line was completely wrecked and rendered impassable, and Joubert, whose "special" was timed to arrive at Bloemfontein at 8.10 A.M., lost his last chance of interfering with the proceedings! This in itself was an excellent *coup*, and particularly serviceable, since it secured to the British the use of twenty-six locomotives at a time when they were much needed.

General French had also seized and destroyed some portions of the railway south of Bloemfontein. His headquarters were made at the house of Mr. Steyn's brother—who had tried unsuccessfully to get away, and was forced to remain at his farm—while the troops were now posted at different points outside the town, and were, in comparison with their former state, in clover.

Early on the 13th the 1st Cavalry Brigade moved slowly towards some kopjes to the east of Bloemfontein and occupied them. All knew the great day was come when Lord Roberts with Kelly-Kenny's and Colville's divisions, the Guards Brigade, and the Mounted Infantry would be presently marching into the Free State capital. Whereupon the adventurous journalist, determined there should be no pie without the impress of his finger, put his best leg foremost and decided to lead the way. The correspondents of the *Sydney Herald*, the *Daily News*, and the *Daily Telegraph* were seen like madmen spurring over the plain. There was ten to one on the favourite, the Burleigh veteran, and the Colonial was only backed for a place, yet he it was who won! They were received in the Market Square with beams. There was a shade of relief even on the most surly countenances. Mr. Fraser, a member of the Executive, the Mayor of Bloemfontein, and others, "bigwigs of B.," as somebody called them, came out and did the honours. These gentlemen were invited to take carriages out to welcome the British force, which—diplomacy being the better part of hostility—they accordingly did. In starting they encountered the first of the British victors, Lieutenant Chester-Master, with three of Remington's scouts. At last they came to the Chief's halting-place, and the surrender of the town was made known. The mediæval ceremony of delivering up the keys of Parliament and Presidency was gone through. Formalities over, Lord Roberts made the gracious assurance that, provided no opposition was offered, the lives and properties of the Bloemfontein public were safe in his hands. Having notified his intention to enter the capital in state, the Mayor, Landrost, and others departed to acquaint the townspeople.

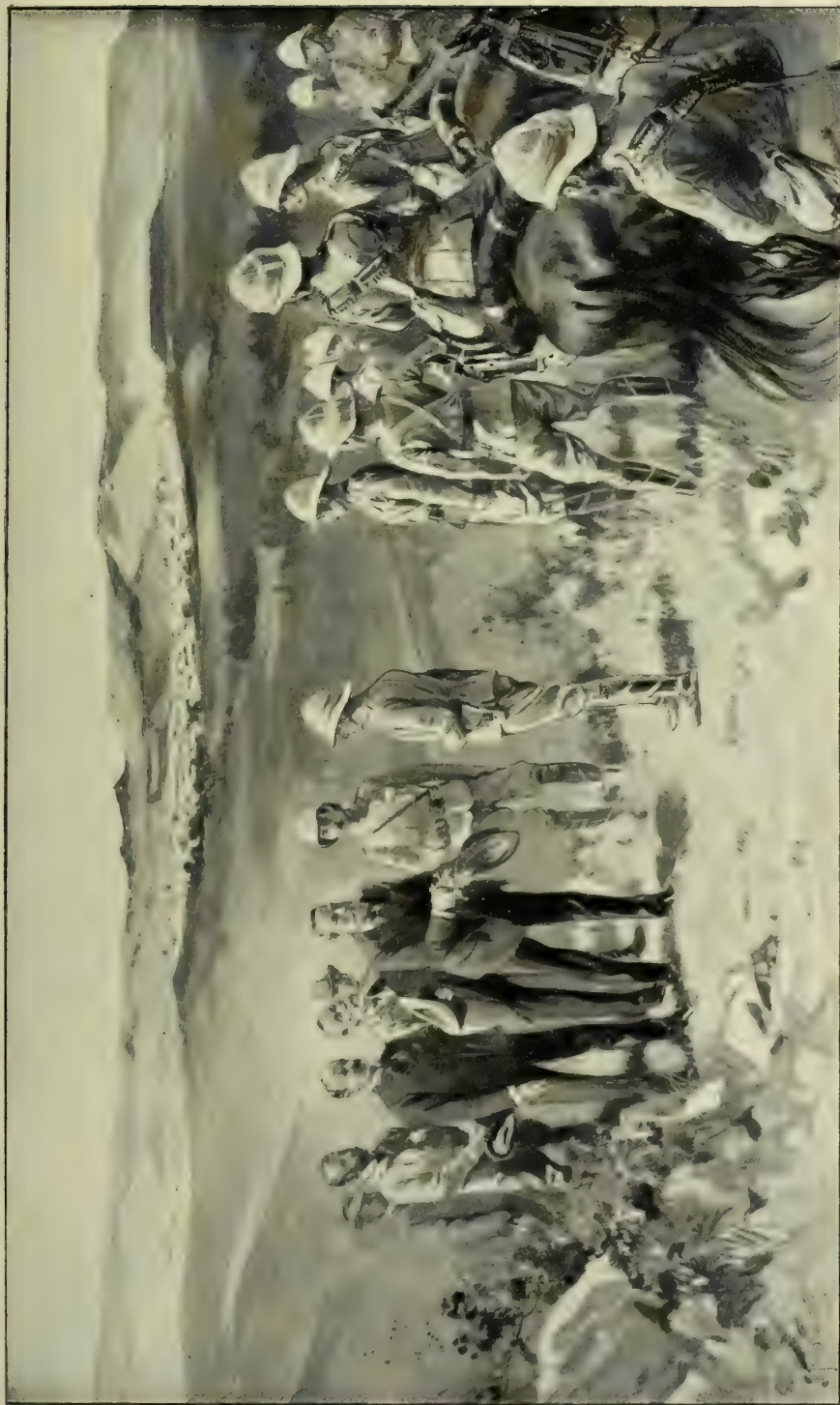
The Transvaal War

AT BLOEMFONTEIN

Bloemfontein! A name of milk and honey, of flowers and dew! Every vowel breathed of pastoral simplicity, of luscious grasses and lowing kine, of gambolling game and purling stream. A name for a poet to conjure with! a talisman to awaken the mellow music of a Herrick and recall the soul of Walton to benevolent rejoicings in the "sights and sounds of the open landscape." Unfortunately, the mellifluous name was not derived from the German for flowers or from the melody of fountains. It owed its origin to a Boer peasant who stood godfather to the hamlet and also to an adjacent stream. Here in other days the innocent Voertrekker unpacked his waggons and set out his little farmstead, choosing green rising ground, an oasis in the sandy veldt, and the neighbourhood of a refreshing rivulet for comfort's sake, and not because he foresaw that in fifty years this spot would be the central scene in one of the largest dramas of the world! In the year 1845 the Union Jack first waved its protective folds over the homestead. At that period it was converted into the official abode of a British Resident, and from that time, with an expansion which was truly British, the tiny village developed till it became a town, and finally passed over, through British apathy and dislike for responsibility, to the hands of the Free Staters. And there it might and would have remained had not President Steyn, who owed us no grudge, and with whom we were on the best of terms, decided to put his finger in the diplomatic pie, in the hope that some of the plums would fall to his share. Thus, in his greed for power and his contempt for the British, he embroiled his country, and being unable to defend his capital, was forced to scurry off to his birthplace, Winburg, some miles to the east, where, with the assistance of his foreign mercenaries, he yet hoped to save himself from the consequences of his ill-advised interference. So it came to pass that on the 13th of March 1900, thirty-nine days after the commencement of his great march, Lord Roberts, with the magnificent British army in his wake, moved unopposed towards the capital of the Free State.

The entry into the town was an imposing spectacle. The Mayor, Dr. Kellner, the Landrost, Mr. Papenfus, and Mr. Fraser, as we know, had driven out in a cart to meet Lord Roberts, and four miles outside the town the keys of the town were given up. Then the Field-Marshal, the most simply dressed man in his whole army, appeared at the head of a cavalcade a mile long. He was followed by his military secretary, his aides-de-camp, the general officers on his staff with their respective staffs. Then came the foreign attachés, some war-correspondents, and Lord Roberts' Indian ser-

Mr. Kellner.
Mr. Pappenfus.
Mr. Collins.
Lord Roberts.



THE FORMAL SURRENDER OF BLOEMFONTEIN.

Drawing by J. Finnemore, from a Sketch by W. B. Wollen, R.I.

At Bloemfontein

vants, who contributed a warm note of colour to the sombre files of kharki. After this came a serpentine train of cavalry and guns, which entered the city at one o'clock. It was the most wonderful military display that has been seen for years. A gigantic army—not a peace but a war army, not the crude army of Salisbury Plain but the perfected article, the army minus its raw recruits and plus its trained reserves, which owed its magnificent development to the man whom Lord Wolseley has called “the greatest War Minister we ever had.” Looking at the splendid physique of the warrior multitude, it was impossible for military men, even those who had criticised most severely the short service system, to deny that to-day the triumph of Lord Cardwell’s principle was complete!

The crowds collected from far and wide, all business was suspended, and knots and cliques gathered together to witness the procession moving up the slopes towards the town itself. Cheer after cheer rang through the air, kerchiefs waved and blessings were prayed for, as the procession marched through the collected crowd and on into the market square. Lord Roberts then went to the Government Buildings, and took formal possession in the name of the sovereign. There was renewed cheering and singing of “God save the Queen,” when, half-an-hour later, at twenty minutes to two, a small silken Union Jack, specially worked by Lady Roberts, was seen floating over the town.

The day passed without notable incident. A public holiday was observed, and the kharki-clad crowds rejoiced themselves by singing “Tommy Atkins” and feasting right royally. They were quite undisturbed by the scarcely complimentary remarks of the Burghers, who compared them in number and colour and appetite to a swarm of locusts!

Mr. Steyn’s brother, who, it may be remembered, had failed to get away with his belongings in time, remained discreetly at his farm, where he entertained General French, and subsequently Lord Roberts. One of the curious features of the entry into the capital of the Free State was the extraordinary welcome given by the inhabitants to the conquerors. Regiment after regiment filed past to the tune of hearty cheers, and surprised pleasure at the orderly and humane entry of the enemy was visible on every face. While the public offices were taken over by Lord Roberts’ staff, the banks were visited by Colonel Richardson. This officer was accounted one of the heroes of the hour, for sufficient praise could not be given to the achievements of the Army Corps or to Colonel Richardson, whose task of provisioning, foraging, and transporting 40,000 men and 18,000 horses savoured of the labours of Hercules. There were quibblers, of course; but, practically considered, all had gone off without a hitch, and the whole arrangements moved, as the

The Transvaal War

phrase is, "on greased wheels," the influence over all of the beloved "Bobs" having been simply magical.

The next day Lord Roberts inspected the Guards Brigade, complimented them on their splendid march, and expressed his regret that through a mistake he had been unable to enter Bloemfontein at the head of the Brigade. He consoled them by saying, "I will lead you into Pretoria!" In these gracious words the troops were rewarded for their disappointment, for the Chief, though he had promised them to lead them into the town, had finally decided that it was expedient to enter the capital without waiting for the infantry.

The Guards Brigade had made a magnificent march of thirty-eight miles in twenty-eight hours, taking from 3 P.M. on the 12th to 1 P.M. on the 13th, with an interval of only two and a half hours for sleep. Yet, in spite of this, and of having been in some of the toughest fights of the campaign, they were cheery and elated. One of their number (the Scots Guards) described their arrival:—"We waited three hours outside Bloemfontein for Lord Roberts, as we were told that the Commander-in-Chief wished to ride at the head of the Guards Brigade into the town. But he did not come, and our Colonel got orders to go in on his own. Our reception in Bloemfontein would have surprised you. It was quite funny in its way—not in the least like entering an enemy's town. The people simply came forth and cheered us as friends. A small group of nuns who came out to meet us wished us 'Good evening,' and said we were very welcome. To myself, as an Aberdonian, it was very home-like to pass by a shop with the inscription, 'Bon-Accord Restaurant.' The proprietor was standing at the door shouting himself hoarse. I was not surprised afterwards to learn that he was a pure Aberdonian. We camped outside the town, and next day Lord Roberts reviewed the Guards Brigade. His Lordship made a short speech, in which he complimented us on our rapid march, and said he was sorry he had not been able to lead us into Bloemfontein. 'But,' said his Lordship, 'I hope to be at your head when we go into Pretoria.' We all gave three very hearty cheers for the Commander-in-Chief, who has always been the soldier's friend. We would follow him anywhere."

To return to the closing events of the momentous 13th. At 8 P.M. a telegram was sent home describing with simple brevity the entry into the capital:—"From Lord Roberts to the Secretary for War.—Bloemfontein, March 13, 8 P.M.—By the help of God and by the bravery of Her Majesty's soldiers, the troops under my command have taken possession of Bloemfontein. The British flag now flies over the Presidency, vacated last evening by Mr. Steyn, late President of the Orange Free State."

At Bloemfontein

An army order was issued on the 14th, in which the Chief said :—

“On February 12 this force crossed the boundary of the Free State ; three days later Kimberley was relieved ; on the fifteenth day the bulk of the Boer army under one of its most trusted generals was made prisoner ; on the seventeenth day news came of the relief of Ladysmith ; and on March 13, twenty-nine days from the commencement of operations, the capital of the Free State was occupied.

“This is a record of which any army would be proud—a record which could not have been achieved except by earnest, well-disciplined men, determined to do their duty, whatever the difficulties and dangers.

“Exposed to the extreme heat of the day, bivouacking under heavy rain, marching long distances often on reduced rations, all ranks have displayed an endurance, cheerfulness, and gallantry which is beyond all praise.”

Lord Roberts added that he desired especially to refer to the heroic spirit with which the wounded had borne their suffering. No word nor murmur of complaint had been uttered. The anxiety of all when succour came was that their comrades should be attended to first.

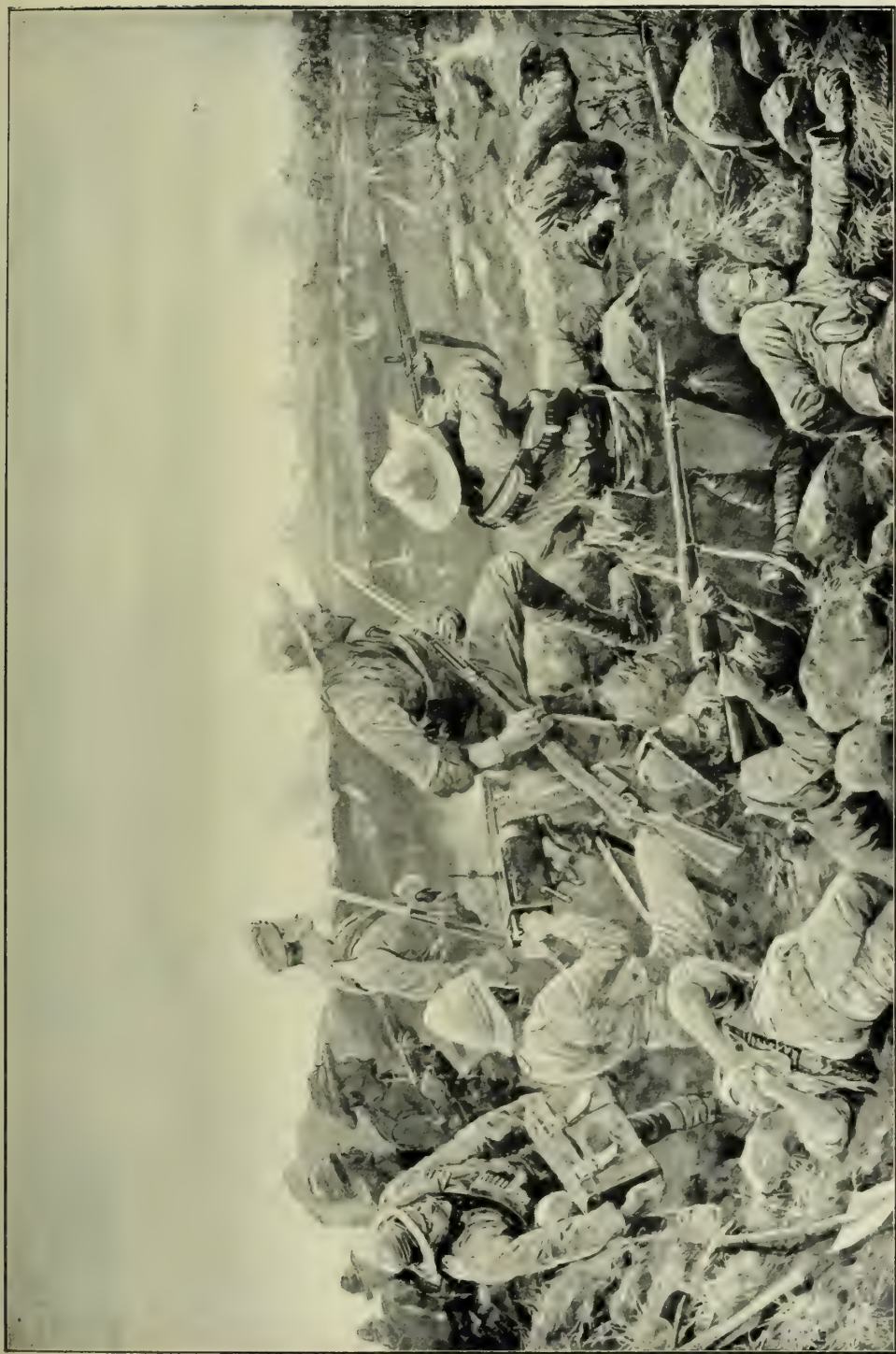
So the great march was over—the hurry, the fatigue, the loss of life, the perpetual anxieties had brought about the desirable end—and the tremendous first act in the historic drama of the century was nearing its conclusion. Looking back on the difficulties that had been surmounted—the movement of some 40,000 men and 20,000 quadrupeds across over 100 miles of mostly dry veldt, where water was scarce and heat tropical, and where the enemy lurked in masses in kopje or donga, and had to be fought at intervals—the march appeared little short of miraculous. Now the curtain was shortly to go up on the first scene of the second act, an act which would have for its background the Orange River Colony, formerly known as the Orange Free State !

CHAPTER IV

MAFEKING IN FEBRUARY

THE investment was much less close than formerly. Owing to the increasing activity in other parts of the theatre of war, Colonel Baden-Powell was relieved of the pressing attentions that were previously bestowed on him. Now for the first time he found himself in touch with the outer world, for telegraphic communication was restored in the direction of Gaborone, about ninety miles north of Mafeking, and from thence a bi-weekly service of runners was instituted for the conveyance of letters and telegrams, of course at the owners' risk. There was delight all round, and "Old Bathing Towel," as contemporary Carthusians used irreverently to call him, made haste to rejoice the hearts of those at home with a report of his doings.

On the 4th of February the etiquette of the Sabbath was broken by an accident. The machine-gun at Fort Ayr was fired, and the enemy was not slow to reply. Lieutenant Grenfell, unarmed and without a flag of truce, pluckily went out to tender apologies for the accident. He was met by the Boers, who exchanged for a flask of whisky two copies of the *Standard and Diggers' News*, containing glowing accounts of Boer victories on the Tugela! It needed more than the contents of the flask to correct the dismay occasioned by the lamentable, if exaggerated, news of the abandonment of Spion Kop, and the inhabitants could only console themselves by remembering what a stupendous and gratuitous liar the Boer could be. Luckily for them, they only accepted half of the Dutchmen's tales, and had learnt by experience that the art of editing Boer journals was dependent on imaginative rather than realistic talent. For instance, "one who knew" described the methods of *Volkstem* thus:—"When you knew it, something could be extracted. The key to the mystery was this: The paper always published the exact opposite of what had taken place. For instance, a few days before Cronje's capture it had a grand headline—'Cronje the Captor.' And underneath came the astounding statement that Cronje had cornered 900 British Lancers on the Koodoosrand. Alas! for Cronje and his Lancers! They existed only in the editor's fertile imagination." So, notwithstanding the report of reverses elsewhere, the large heart of Mafeking was still bent on bursting its cramped shell. If antiquated methods of warfare were carried on in other



SLEEPLESS MAFEKING—HOT WORK IN THE TRENCHES.

Drawing by R. Caton Woodville.

Mafeking in February

parts of South Africa, they were certainly not pursued here, for Colonel Baden-Powell was a modern of the moderns. The secrets of the enemy's tactics were at his fingers' ends, and where science failed to match them resource came in. He knew how to make dynamite spit and scream and threaten; he studied the problem of tension and the art of playing on the nerves of his adversary, and Cronje's remark, "Not men, but devils," made as that redoubtable one shook the dust of Mafeking off his shoes, must have been the dearest compliment the Colonel's heart could crave. The Colonel, in a despatch forwarded to Colonel Nicholson—an officer who, with a small column and armoured train, held Mangwe, Palapye, and other places on the rail—dated February 12, described his activities:—

"MAFEKING, February 12.

"On the 3rd inst. our Nordenfeldt was chiefly occupied in preventing the enemy from completing their new work on the northern slope of the south-eastern heights. Assistance was rendered by our seven-pounder, emplaced in the bush to the east of Cannon Kopje. The enemy's siege-gun replied vigorously. During that night the enemy were nervous and restless, and kept firing volleys at our working parties, being apparently apprehensive of attack. Their firing continued until dawn, when the work in our trenches ceased.

"There was a curious incident at Fort Ayr that Sunday. Our machine-gun there was fired accidentally, and the enemy replied. Lieutenant Grenfell went out and apologised for the accident. Though the gun had been fired and the enemy had replied, he did not take a flag of truce with him. The Boers met him, and exchanged two copies of the *Standard and Diggers' News* for a flask of whisky.

"On Monday, the 5th, irregular shelling continued all day. In the evening heavy rains fell, but the enemy kept up the bombardment till midnight, firing a new incendiary shell, which, however, failed to take effect.

"On the 7th there was a desultory bombardment, and the sharpshooters were busy. On the 8th the enemy's siege-gun fired one shell only.

"On the 11th the enemy were quiet, being engaged in fortifying their big gun emplacement, and generally preparing to resist attack from outside. A good deal of night-firing was exchanged between our outlying positions and those of the enemy, volleys being fired at short ranges.

"Next day the enemy were fairly quiet. Mr. Dall, a well-known citizen, was killed, and two Cape boys were wounded, while two natives in the town were killed and some four wounded."

The circumstances of Mr. Dall's death were deeply tragic, for his wife, who was in the women's laager at the time, on hearing of the news was half-distracted by the shock. Owing to the grievous affair the dance that was to have taken place was postponed to the following day.

Colonel Baden-Powell issued an order which broke to the besieged the information that the Commander-in-Chief had requested them to hold on till May. Hearts dropped to zero! If properly conserved, it was believed that provisions might be eked out till the

THE MAFEKING MAIL.

SPECIAL SIEGE SLIP.

ISSUED DAILY. SHELLS PERMITTING.

TERMS: ONE SHILLING PER WEEK, PAYABLE IN ADVANCE.

No. 58.

Thursday, January 25th, 1900.

105th day of Siege.

The Mafeking Mail.

THURSDAY, 25th JANUARY, 1900.

With this number commences the subterranean production of the *Mafeking Mail* Siege Slips, which we hope will now appear with the same impressive regularity that distinguishes our request for subscriptions. We regret the long interval between the publication of this and the last issue, but our staff are not conchophiles, and the one shell through the office created a scare. It was therefore necessary to make a bomb-proof for the composing to be done in; as we would be the last to coerce anybody to continue their avocation under conditions which nerve failure made terrifying, even though we believed but little in the existence of the danger. We think our friends will agree that the circumstances under which the slips are now being produced may certainly be regarded as interestingly exceptional.

The Bank will be open on Sunday from 9 till 10 a.m. to receive deposits.

In connection with Banks and Banking affairs we call attention to the General Order regarding the issue of Bank notes, also one announcing the advent of a paper currency. This order clearly establishes these notes a legal tender, but does not limit the amount of any one payment. It would be interesting to know whether as this issue is to balance the silver shortfall, the limit of a legal tender will be the same, i.e. £2.

In our last issue we gave a synopsis of the telegrams and paragraph appearing in the *Natal Witness*, relating to Lord Methuen's column, that being the one to which we are most interestedly directing our attention and feeling more curious regarding its movements. In to-morrow's slip we will try to collect all that is reliable regarding the other portions of the force. To-day we have only space to reproduce the notice published yesterday for public information by the Colonel Commanding.

LATEST NEWS.

The following news, which has been received to-day up to the 18th instant, is published for information.

General situation remains much as before. Lord Roberts has arrived in South Africa with Lord Kitchener as his Chief Staff Officer, and reinforcements are daily arriving.

In Natal Sir R. Buller is still South of the Tugela, and a big engagement is expected shortly.

A determined attack was made on Ladysmith on the 6th instant and was repulsed with heavy loss. The place is impregnable. The troops have a good deal of sickness there, so will be glad to get out.

Lord Methuen occupies a strong position on Modder River, and had repaired the railway and bridge and is awaiting his

reinforcements in a strong position. Kimberley is well supplied with food and is not closely invested. Similarly General Gatacre is entrenched in a strong position at Maitland, thereby preventing the Boers interfering with the Port Elizabeth line to the Free State and Kimberley.

General French has again pushed forward from Arundel to Colesberg Bridge after a successful fight. He is now reported to be surrounding the enemy at Colesberg.

The Boers have got every available man in the field now.

Up North Colonel Plumer's force is now at Gaborone with advanced force and armoured train in touch with the Boers near Crocodile Pools. The Boers have retired within their own border and are occupying a strong position with artillery there. Colonel Plumer is, however, getting his artillery down from the North, including a big quick-firing gun, and hopes shortly to clear them out.

The natives there, who had been helping the Boers, are now deserting them and report their very short of food.

Lord Roberts telegraphs to the Colonel Commanding his warm congratulations on Mafeking's plucky defence, he only wishes he could get help to us at once, and earnestly hopes we can manage to hold out for a few weeks more, when the situation will be changed. This we can do for a few months more if required.

Mafeking Garrison.

GENERAL ORDERS.

By Colonel R. S. S. Baden-Powell,
Commanding Frontier Force.

MAFEKING, 23RD JANUARY, 1900.

Paper Currency.—Owing to the scarcity of silver, it has been found necessary to issue a paper currency for small amounts (namely, 3s., 2s., 1s., 9d., 6d., and 3d.). This will be redeemable on the termination of the Siege, and is current for its full face value. All persons are therefore warned that refusing to accept; charging commission on; or paying less than the full face value of this currency is illegal, and will render the offender liable to severe penalties.

MAFEKING, 22ND JANUARY, 1900.

Issue of Bank Notes.—It is notified for general information that the Colonel Commanding has authorised the issue, by the local branch of the Standard Bank, of certain Notes of £1 and £5 face value respectively on Banks outside the limits of the Cape Colony.

MAFEKING, 15TH JANUARY, 1900.

Disposition of the Enemy's Force.—The enemy have moved the big gun from its position on the South-eastern heights to a safer one East of the Race Course. The credit for making them evacuate their position is due to those N.C.O.'s and men who, under Inspector Marsh's orders, have occupied the advanced S.E. trenches and brought so effective a fire to bear upon the

gun. To this result the good work done by the Nordenfeldt, under Low and Mulholland, greatly contributed, and also, particularly, the sharpshooting of 'the B.S.A. Police and "Bechuanaland Rifles, in the advanced positions gained by Corporal Cook. Our Artillery, under Major Panzer, had also shown them in one day a bombardment how unsafe their position was if at any time our guns choose to shell it again. The enemy have now had to leave their chosen position and take up one less advantageous to themselves, and opens up to us much ground to the South.

Variety Concert Competition.—This competition was adjudged by the Committee to have been won by the troupe of the Cape Police, whose performance was on all hands agreed to be a first-rate one. At the same time the thanks of the community are due also to the other troupes who, though unsuccessful in taking the prize, nevertheless afforded great entertainment by their clever performances.

Composite Forage.—In future a Composite Forage Ration, viz., 10 lbs. per horse per day, will be issued on receipt of 7-day requisitions from the A.S.C. Depot, Isaac's Store. The wool bales containing the forage on its first issue must be returned the following day to the Depot, as only a very limited number exist for bagging the ration from time to time. O.C.'s of Corps and Units are required therefore to make their own arrangements for storing the Composite Forage. All persons drawing this Composite Forage in small quantities or on payment, are required to provide their own sacks.

By order,
E. H. CEILL, Major.
Chief Staff Officer

Meat Rations.

WITH reference to a Notice in the "*Mafeking Mail*," dated 13th inst., re reducing the Fresh Meat Ration to 1lb., it is considered desirable not to reduce the Ration at present. It will therefore still be issued in the same proportion as hitherto.

NOTICE.

TOWN DAIRY.

OWING to the demand for Milk for the sick and wounded, also for the women and children, supplies, except only to the above, is reluctantly stopped from date until further notice.

E. MUSSON.
Mafeking, 18th Jan., 1900.

Printed and published by
Tomkins & Son, Market Square, Mafeking.
Editor and Manager: C. N. H. Whales.

Mafeking in February

Queen's birthday, but the quality of the fare was bad enough without consideration of the quantity. The men were tough, they were game for anything ; but the women—helpless, worn, unnerved, surrounded by children, and limited to the confines of an insanitary laager—they made an additional tangle to the already knotty situation. The townsfolk going to the posts in the trenches, with their own lives in their hands, had upon them the burden of thought for those, their weaker belongings, who were waning with anxiety and disease—waning many of them into their graves. Still the garrison grumbled little. It set out as Sabbath decoration for the forts and trenches some smart Union Jacks which had been worked by the ladies in the town, and the dauntless ones engaged in a concert, the programme of which was vastly appreciated. Here "B.-P.'s" well-known talents came in handy, for he played the Chevalier of the entertainment and displayed all the versatility of that renowned performer. From the æsthetic Paderewski (with his hair on) to a Whitechapel Coster is a good jump, but the gallant Colonel, who had so long impersonated Job to order of the British Government, was not to be defeated by minor representations, however various. After this joviality a ball was attempted, but alas! with sorry success. Before the gaily attired guests were well under way the uproar of Maxims and Mausers had begun. They tried to dance. It would have been a case of Nero fiddling while Rome was burning. A staff officer arrived ordering all to fall in. Soon there was a general stampede, officers fled to their posts, orderlies rushed off to sound the alarm, the galloping Maxim tore through the blue obscurity from the western outposts to the town ; the Bechuanaland Rifles and the Protectorate Regiment hurried to the brickfields, the Cape Police made for the eastern advance posts, while the ladies, charming, disconsolate, hied them precipitately to places of refuge. There, in the lambent beams of the moon, were seen excited shadows, all either rushing to their bomb-proof shelters or scudding to the sniping posts of the river. Showers of bullets flecked the sapphire air, and the exquisite serene night was changed into a long, wakeful, quaking anguish. The Boers kept up their firing operations throughout the small hours, but at dawn, when they received a *quid pro quo* from the British quarter, they deemed it best to subdue their ardour for a brief space. Rest was shortlived. On the 13th the gunners again made themselves offensive by endeavouring to hit the flour-mill, and they succeeded in their efforts, though fortunately without destroying it. They pursued their murderous industries throughout the day, pouring bullets on any one who dared to show a nose in the open, and about noon succeeded in seriously wounding Captain Girdwood, who was returning to luncheon on his bicycle.

The Transvaal War

The unfortunate officer—one of the most popular fellows and as gallant as he was jolly—never rallied after receiving the fatal wound and died on the following day. In the evening he was buried. The solemn rite was conducted with simplicity under the mild moonbeams which silvered the gloomy scene and softened the rigid faces of the bronzed warriors who hung in melancholy regret round the open grave.

The Boers sometimes endeavoured to affect jocosity. From the advanced trench, which was some hundred and ten yards from the besiegers' main trench, their voices could be heard travelling on the breeze. The prelude to their attacks began not seldom with "Here's a good morning to you, Mafeking," or other remarks of cheery or personal nature. Then rattle, rattle, and one of the British band would drop. On one of these occasions an amusing if tragic ruse was perpetrated. The Boers were known to be fond of music, and some one of the tormented hit on the happy idea of performing for the benefit of the hostile audience. The savage breast was soothed. The Boers were "drawn." They stopped to listen. Enraptured, they advanced nearer, nearer. Finally, two enthusiastic, inquisitive heads protruded from cover—protruded never to protrude again!

The Boers soon began to try the expedient of attacking Mafeking by proxy. Assaults were made, or rather attempted, by a mongrel force, composed largely of mercenaries—Germans, Scandinavians, Frenchmen, and renegade Irish (probably "returned empties" from the gallant Emerald Isle), ne'er-do-weel's, who felt it necessary at times to do something for their living. These were assisted by natives, who were pressed into their service to make a convenient padding for their front in advance, for their rear in retreat, as they took good care to save their own hides when retirement was obligatory.

Fortunately their artillery practice, which was patiently kept up, was very inferior, otherwise Mafeking would soon have been in ruins. On one afternoon the enemy plied his siege-gun and another gun with great vigour. Out of eight rounds one shot besprinkled two of the besieged with dust; a 5-pounder gun from one quarter and a 1-pounder Maxim from another filled the air with deplorable detonations for two whole hours, yet happily no life was lost. To this hot fire the inhabitants replied only with their rifles. It was wonderful in what good stead their rifles had stood them, and it was thanks to them, and not to the Government, that the town had been saved at all.

The difficulties both at Kimberley and Mafeking were the result of the obstructive policy adopted by the Colonial Government before the outbreak of hostilities. While the storm-cloud hung on the horizon, Kimberley had appealed to Mr. Shcreiner for permission to send up from Port Elizabeth Maxims which had been ordered by

Mafeking in February

the De Beers Company, and the licence was refused on the ground that there was no necessity to strengthen the defences of the town. The appeals from Mafeking were treated in much the same way, the authorities at the Cape suggesting that there was no reason to believe that the situation demanded extra precautions!

Ingenuity and pluck had been the backbone of British defence, not British guns. An ordnance factory was established, and excellent shells were cast, and even powder manufactured. Thus the alarm lest ammunition should run out before the arrival of relief was allayed. The great ambition of the garrison was to complete a 5½-inch howitzer, and throw "home-made shells from a home-made gun with home-made powder."

Major Baillie described with some pride the self-contained nature of the community: "We have our bank, our ordnance factory, and our police; and we flourish under a beneficent and remote autocracy. And now, as regards the ordnance factory, it was started for the manufacture of shells for our 7-pounder, for shot, brass and iron, for our antique cannon, and for the adaptation of 5-pounder shells (left here by Dr. Jameson) to our 7-pounders by the addition of enlarged driving-bands. These have all proved a complete success, and too much praise cannot be given to Connely and Cloughlan of the Locomotive Department, who have organised and run the factory. As great a triumph has been the manufacture of powder and the invention of fuses by Lieutenant Daniels, British South Africa Police and the Glamorgan Artillery Militia, which render us secure against running short of ammunition. A gun also is being manufactured, and will shortly be used. This factory is of long standing, but the authorities had not allowed us to allude to its existence."

Other manufactures, too, were commenced, for manufacture it must be called—the art of making the poor skeletons, at one time known as horses, into succulent meat. Some declared that the number of cats and dogs was visibly thinning, but none dared pry too closely into the workings of the wonderful machinery that fed them. A number of the Protectorate Regiment's horses were slaughtered, and any others that were shot by the enemy were passed on to the commissariat.

A soup-kitchen, under the supervision of Captain Wilson, was opened for the purpose of supplying some 600 natives with nourishing food, and rendering them contented with the vicissitudes of fate. The compound was scarcely inviting, and resembled a third-rate haggis. In two great boilers scraps of such meat as could be gathered together were simmered down, and to this immense stock-pot was added various meals, which gave the mess the necessary consistency. The natives bought it eagerly at 6d. a quart, and really rejoiced in it.

The Transvaal War

The blacks, indeed, suffered less than the whites. The latter were paying a guinea a day for very scant fare, while the Baralongs, who were earning from 1s. to 2s. 6d. a day, were able to sustain life on half their wages, and save the rest to buy luxuries, a wife possibly, when the stress of the siege was over. The young children suffered most of all, for malaria and unsuitable food played havoc in the women's laager, and the graveyard was filled with small victims to the Imperial cause.

About the middle of the month the Boers became abnormally active, and for several days sounds of digging and picking suggested that they were throwing out new trenches beyond those they already manned in the region of the brickfields. The full significance of the activity was discovered by Sergeant-Major Taylor, who—in charge of three pits which formed the most advanced post—suddenly espied, some fifty yards in advance of the limit of the Boer trenches, a hostile figure! The apparition wore a German uniform, and Sergeant-Major Taylor was soon aware that the enemy were intending to sap the British position. Colonel Baden-Powell was informed of the impending danger, and at night a counter-sap extending 100 yards was thrown out, from which point it would be possible for the besieged to fire on the new work. The tension of the situation was extreme. Eighty yards only separated the combatants, and the enemy continued to burrow, approaching little by little, while the British continued to harass them in their labours by an active fusillade whenever a chance presented itself. But the operations continued, and every hour brought the Boers nearer. At last a night came when the enemy had almost reached his goal, and, moreover, had moved the Creusot gun to a position on the south-eastern heights so as to command the entire area. With due precaution the defenders tried to occupy the advanced posts, but the Boer firing was so correct and persistent that the position was rendered untenable. Sergeant-Major Taylor, a splendid fellow—who more than once had ventured eavesdropping to the edge of the Boer trenches—and four others were mown down in their gallant efforts to save the situation. The enemy, satisfied with his exertions in this direction, now began to turn his attention to the forts in the rear—a bad move, for while the Dutchmen hammered in that region the British rapidly seized the occasion to construct a traverse across the mouth of the sap. This, of course, was not carried forward without attracting the attention of the enemy, who fired fast and furiously. But the task was accomplished, after which the Boers and the British, worn out, rested from their hostilities. For a day and a night the Boers were in occupation of the advanced hole and the sap that had been carried from it, but it was soon recaptured, and the connection made with the Boer trenches blown up with dynamite.

Mafeking in February

On the 20th the Protectorate Regiment gave a dinner, which turned out to be quite a luxurious repast. Invitations were supplemented by the request to bring their own bread! Some of the officers shot a few locust-birds, small as quail, which, when carved judiciously, went round among the guests. Added to this there was a sucking pig, obtained none knew whence, but nevertheless most welcome.

On the 22nd, Sergeant-Major Looney of the Commissariat was sentenced to five years penal servitude for the misappropriation of comestibles and stores, which had been going on for some time. The Commissariat was reorganised by Captain Ryan (Army Service Corps) with untiring energy and economy. To the soup-kitchen went everything, scraps of meat, or hoof, meal, unsifted oats, bran, all were turned to account, and food of a sustaining, if not luxurious kind, was provided for every one. At this time the Boers were growing despondent, and began to doubt their chance of forcing the town to surrender. From a conversation overheard by some wary ones who had crept close to the enemy's trenches, it appeared that President Steyn had urged Commandant Snyman to carry the town by storm, and afterwards to come to the rescue of the Free Staters with his force, but the Burghers had expressed their opinion that it was now too late to take Mafeking—they should have done so the first week.

The inhabitants were very pleased with their own ingenuity, and in their ordnance workshops the manufacture of shot and shell went on apace. The mechanics of the railway works, by a system which seemed to act on the lines of a conjuring trick, turned out from the shell-factory about fifty rounds a day. No waste was allowed. Even the fragments of the enemy's shells were utilised. These and scraps of cast iron were purchased at twopence a pound for smelting, and twopence, it must be remembered, was now a magnificent disbursement, as money was growing more and more scarce. Curiously enough, the present foreman, Conolly, was at one time manager of the shell department of the ordnance factory at Pretoria, where he personally supervised the manufacture of the larger shells. He now necessarily took a parental interest in the shells flung into Mafeking by the Boers' Creusot gun, and also in those new ones that were flung out of Mafeking as a result of his own and others' inventive genius! A good deal of shelling took place, and that on the 23rd was said to be a salute in honour of Independence Day in the Orange Free State. The inhabitants of Mafeking would not have grudged their enemies the, to them, distressing attempt at festivity had they then known that four days later the death-blow of that independence would be struck, and the salute was destined to be the last in the history of the Republics!

The Transvaal War

Fare was growing more and more meagre. Horseflesh was diversified by bread made from horse forage; water, to say the least of it, was becoming interesting only to bacteriologists. The native population for the most part starved; they now and then indulged in a raid and brought back fat fare, which for a day or two had a visible effect upon their ebon skeletons, but they brought it at the risk of their lives.

Uninterrupted deluges of rain made existence a perpetual misery, the trenches and also the bomb-proof shelters were flooded, and the hapless inhabitants, saturated, fled into the open, uncertain whether death by fire was not preferable to death by water. The first, at all events, promised to be expeditious, while the second offered prospects of prolonged sousing and exquisite tortures of enduring rheumatism. Daily the state of affairs became less tolerable. Typhoid and malaria stalked abroad, and in the children's and women's laager diphtheria had set in.

On the 25th a message was received from the Queen. Its effect was electrical. It was vastly heartening to feel and to know that the great Sovereign herself knew and sympathised with the history of the struggles and privations, the loyalty and pluck of this little hamlet in a remote corner of Her Majesty's possessions. It seemed more possible now to starve patriotically, and, with every mouthful of nauseating mule or horse, to put aside personal discomfort and to remember the gracious fact that each individual was a symbol, a sorry and dilapidated one perhaps, but nevertheless a symbol of the majesty and might of Greater Britain. In addition to the royal message there came two days later the stimulating intelligence that Kimberley had been relieved, and that Lord Roberts was advancing on Bloemfontein!

On Majuba Day, all made sure that some sort of attack might be expected, and they prepared to welcome it with a salute from the new howitzer gun which had engaged the genius of the siege arsenal. The Boers, however, were quiet. A good deal of psalm-singing took place in the Boer camp, while the besieged put the big gun through his paces.

Ash Wednesday was observed without sackcloth and ashes. Mafeking had been enjoying Lenten abstinence for months past, and therefore when, at the service on the following Sabbath, the parson reminded them that it was the fast season, every one in the church enjoyed the joke so hugely that smiles were with difficulty suppressed. As one of the congregation afterwards suggested, they had had so much "Extra Special" fasting that they ought to be let off Lenten obligations for five years.

CHAPTER V

AT CHIEVELEY AGAIN

ON the 8th of February General Buller again retired across the Tugela. He realised that his whole flanking movement had been a failure, and though the ill-success has been attributed to many causes, we may safely say that the main cause of the fiasco was the insufficient rapidity with which the scheme was conducted. Napoleon declared that flank marches should be as short, and executed in as brief a time, as possible. Celerity and concealment in these cases must go hand in hand, and when celerity is overlooked concealment becomes impossible. Delay had given the Boers the opportunity to shift their positions and produce a new front even more powerful than that at Colenso. The General's idea had been, after taking Vaal Krantz, to entrench it as the pivot of further operations, but the experience of two days' hard fighting taught him that, owing to the nature of the ground, and the despatch of the Dutchmen, the plan was far from practicable. The position was found to be dominated in every direction by the enemy, and unless Vaal Krantz could be held securely during the advance to Ladysmith, it was thought advisable not to hold it at all. For this reason the Natal Field Force returned to Chieveley, the original scene of operations, where the "Red Bull," as the Boers called him, with indomitable energy, planned out a fourth scheme of attack. It was now to be directed against the Boer left. The battle of the 15th of December was mainly directed against the Boer right, as there were reasons to believe the right to be the weaker of the two flanks. That attack had failed for reasons we know. Circumstances having changed, and more guns and men being now at his disposal, the General determined to direct his energies to the Boer left. The task was a complicated one. Both river and hills twist themselves mysteriously, and seemingly in conspiracy with Boer notions of defence. For instance, the river after leaving Colenso (which may be looked upon as the Boer centre) twists invisibly into the shelter of the impregnable kopjes, and takes a direct turn towards the north, thereby passing in front of the Boer right and in rear of the Boer left. By taking to themselves possession of Hlangwane the enemy had made their position almost unassailable. This formidable left ran in a series of trenches,

The Transvaal War

sangars, and rifle-pits from Colenso past the thorn-bushes by the river, and on to the powerfully fortified hill of Hlangwane. From thence it was extended over the ridge called Green Hill, and farther to the companion eminences of Cingolo and Monte Cristo, and the nek that united them. The first thing, therefore, to be done in a plan for turning this formidable position was to take possession of Hussar Hill, which was accomplished on the 14th of February, from which day and on till the 27th fighting without cessation took place. Some one called it the fighting march, for it was a series of ferociously contested moves from Chieveley to Hussar Hill, and thence *via* Cingolo Nek and Monte Cristo Ridge till the Boer line had been turned and the British forces had placed themselves diagonally across the left of the Boer position. Having worked round in a species of hoop, which crumpled the Boer left before it, and having deposited men and guns to mark as milestones the victorious advance, a frontal advance was soon made on Green Hill, the adjacent slope some three miles from Hlangwane, which mountain became, as a natural consequence of the foregoing proceedings, a somewhat easy prize. The victory at Monte Cristo, which enabled us to acquire Green Hill, may be looked upon as the turning of the tide. From the hour that commanding point was occupied the future of the relieving army was practically secure, for the river was gained, and the Boers once on the run, there needed only the fine fighting quality of our troops—the A1 quality of the world—to bring things to a satisfactory conclusion. But now to try to follow this complicated and well-considered march.

On the 12th of February a force of mounted infantry, with a battalion of infantry, a field-battery, and a Colt battery, reconnoitred Hussar Hill (so called because it was the scene of the surprise to a picket of the 13th Hussars), a long ridge situated at the south of Hlangwane, where General Buller subsequently established his head-quarters. The South African Light Horse and another Colt battery were treated to some fierce volleys by the enemy, with the result that Lieutenant J. Churchill and another officer were wounded. Four men were injured and one was missing. The fight was a brisk one, though of but half-an-hour's duration, for the hill was not strongly held. The troops then moved forwards, winding through a series of wooded ridges to the right, till they reached an entrenched ridge connecting Hlangwane with higher hills on the east. As there were continual increases and changes in regard to the troops, it will be found advisable, before going further, to refer to a table of the distribution of the forces as far as they were then known :—

Sir Redvers Buller's Force

SIR REDVERS BULLER'S FORCE

SECOND DIVISION.—(Major-General Lyttelton).—2nd (Hildyard's) Brigade—2nd East Surrey; 2nd West Yorks; 2nd Devons; 2nd West Surrey. 4th (Norcott's Brigade)—1st Rifle Brigade; 1st Durham Light Infantry; 3rd King's Royal Rifles; 2nd Scottish Rifles (Cameronians); Squadron 13th Hussars; 7th, 14th, and 66th Field Batteries.

THIRD DIVISION.—5th (Hart's) Brigade—1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers; 1st Connaught Rangers; 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers; 1st Border. 6th (Barton's) Brigade—2nd Royal Fusiliers; 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers; 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers; 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers; Squadron 13th Hussars; 63rd, 64th, and 73rd Field Batteries.

FIFTH DIVISION.—(Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Warren).—10th (Coke's) Brigade—2nd Dorset; 2nd Middlesex; 2nd Somerset Light Infantry. 11th (Wynne's) Brigade—2nd Royal Lancaster; 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers; 1st South Lancashire; 1st York and Lancaster; Squadron 13th Hussars; 19th, 20th, and 28th Field Batteries. Corps Troops—1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers; Imperial Light Infantry; Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry; 61st Field Battery (Howitzers); 78th Field Battery; Natal Battery, 9-pounders; twelve Naval 12-pounder quick-firers; 4th Mountain Battery; two 4.7 Naval guns. 1st Cavalry Brigade (Burn-Murdoch)—1st Royal Dragoons; 14th Hussars; Gough's Composite Regiment. 2nd Cavalry Brigade (Dundonald)—Natal Carabineers (squadron); South African Light Horse (four squadrons); Imperial Light Horse (squadron); Natal Police (squadron).

General Lyttelton succeeded General Clery (disabled by blood-poisoning) in command of the Second Division, while Colonel Norcott (Rifle Brigade) temporarily took command of the Fourth Brigade.

On the 14th the army moved to occupy the new position on Hussar Hill. As we know, the irregular cavalry, the South African Horse, had secured the position, and some disappointed Boers who had thought to be beforehand with them had disappeared with much haste and not a little chagrin. After a short time Generals Wynne, Coke, and Barton with their respective brigades joined Sir Charles Warren's division, and bivouacked on the new ground. There was some trouble about water, as Hussar Hill was arid and the nearest river was some miles away. However, necessity is the mother of invention, and necessity brought to light a system of water-waggons by which a small but appreciable amount of water was carried to the troops. While this was going on above, General Lyttelton was moving to the east of Chieveley round the eastern spur of Hussar Hill.

Here during the afternoon a number of Boers hiding among the boulders and dense scrub made themselves obstreperous; but their fire was overcome by our artillery, and before long they were dislodged.

Little happened for two days save some artillery duelling, then

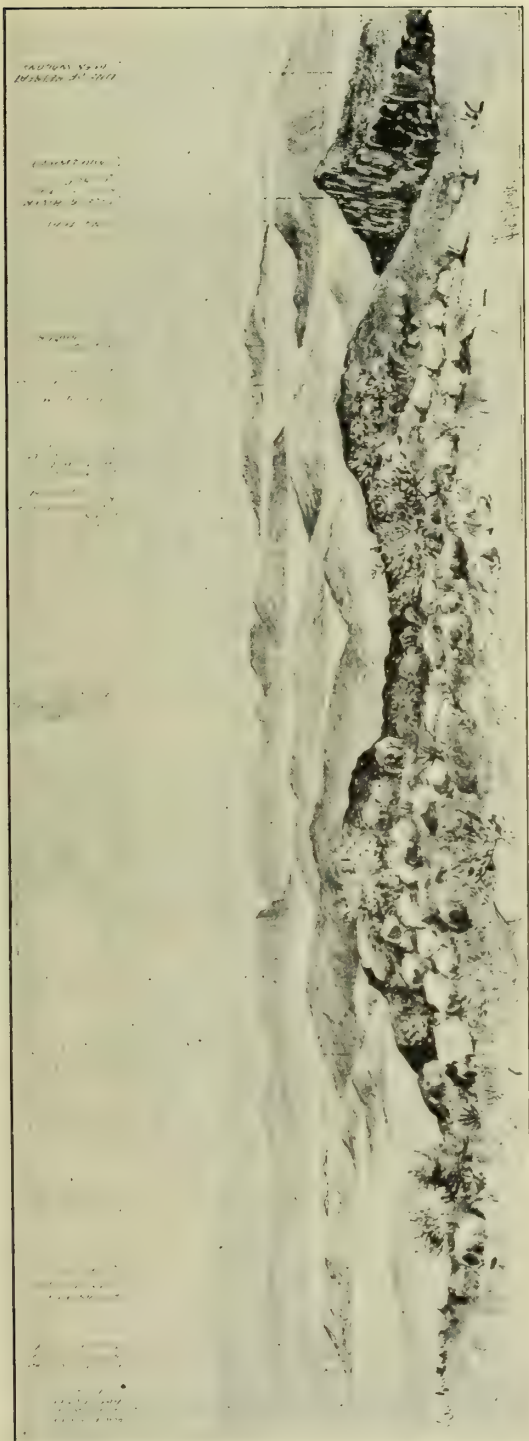
The Transvaal War

an appreciable advance was made. A wooded hill called Cingolo, part of the range east of Hlangwane, was the next to be seized by an adroit flanking movement of the infantry. They gained and kept the top of the hill with but few casualties owing to the dense cover.

At dawn on the 17th a general advance was ordered. Consequently soon after midnight the business of movement began. At daybreak the cavalry under Lord Dundonald marched to discover the enemy's left flank through the tangled and rugged country to the east—country so broken and wooded that on occasions it was impossible to ride, and all that could be done was to lead the horses through thicket, and thorns, and over boulders by the light of intelligence rather than military régime. And while this was going on the artillery was performing a boisterous symphony on seventy instruments, an *aubade* to awaken such Boers as might still be dozing in rock, ravine, or ridge in the regions of Hlangwane.

At last the troopers had wormed and torn and scrambled their way up the ridge, where, on arriving, the Boers accosted them with the music of musketry in tolerably fast time. Bullets whizzed and commenced to send the now well-known cataracts over the advancing troops, and for the moment it seemed to be a toss up as to whether the toil of gaining the position would be in vain. However, the Boers were in small number, and very soon they fell back, leaving the top of the hill before the advance of the Imperial Light Horse and the Natal Carabineers, who slew or captured some Burghers and horses. In their attack they were supported by the Queen's, the right battalion of Hildyard's attack, who had taken a short cut and came up in the nick of time, so that the Boers promptly scurried off and left the troops in undisturbed possession of Cingolo Hill.

Further important movements took place on the 18th. Through the operations of the day before, the Boers had been hunted along towards Monte Cristo, and from thence at daylight they commenced to pour Creusot shells on the British troops. The Queen's, who had bivouacked on the northern slope of Cingolo, and came in for a good deal of fire, valiantly crossed the nek, and, supported by the rest of the 2nd Brigade under General Hildyard, assaulted and finally took the southern end of Monte Cristo. The 4th Brigade occupied the left or western slope. Operations were begun very early, and the long precipitous climb in a baking sun occupied till midday. The advance over country that is trellised with spruits, dongas, thorn-bush, and scrub at times was painfully slow, and the scrambling and stumbling, sometimes on all fours, to the roll and rattle of musketry and the banging of unseen and unlocatable guns occupied some hours. The words of the Scripture, "Eyes have



THE SCENE OF THE FIGHTING AT MONTE CRISTO HILL, ON FEBRUARY 19.
 (From sketches taken during the action by Captain P. U. Vigors, 2nd Devon Regiment.)

The Transvaal War

they and see not," might have been applied to this nerve-trying assault against hidden men with smokeless weapons. No sooner had the troops reached the top of Monte Cristo than they were assailed by a well-directed artillery fire from the direction of the invisible foe, shrapnel, Maxim, and Nordenfeldt guns pouring over the men as they advanced. But they steadily pushed on and up till at last they entirely routed the Boers. These, finding themselves in a desperate situation, took to their heels, leaving tents, food, biltong, lard, potatoes, onions, clothing, bridles, blankets, and Bibles behind them in disarray. In their retreat they were fired on by the cavalry, but they made small reply. Quantities of ammunition were captured, and, unfortunately for those who still maintained their respect for the enemy, several forms of expanding bullets. The Royal Welsh Fusiliers, supported by the rest of the 6th Brigade, assailed the eastern flank of the enemy's position. The 2nd Brigade of Cavalry on the extreme right watched the eastern slopes of Monte Cristo, and drove back those of the enemy who scurried there to escape the artillery fire. They had been completely taken by surprise; they had expected the British to begin a frontal attack on Green Hill, a smooth grassy eminence sliced with the gashes of Boer entrenchments, some of these six feet in depth, others blasted in the solid rock. Assaulted now by big guns in front and flank, attacked in flank and rear, the enemy, without offering much resistance, evacuated their strong positions and fled across the Tugela. That their flight was precipitate was testified by the fact that they even left letters behind. One of these was from General Joubert in answer to a request for supports, in which he said these could not be sent; the position was sufficiently garrisoned with the men they had.

The crest of Monte Cristo gained, all at once took heart. This hill was the hinge on which all the subsequent movements turned. By means of it Green Hill and the frowning eminence of Hlangwane could become ours. From Hlangwane the whole western section of the great Colenso position could be rendered untenable by the enemy. This the Boers well knew, and this was the reason for their tough resistance on the dreadful 15th of December. Now, seeing us masters of Monte Cristo, they wisely decided to make themselves scarce. The British guns once mounted on Monte Cristo made a complete difference in the situation. It was now possible to enfilade many of the choice positions which for two months had been the snug hiding-places of the enemy. Now, in the distance, was visible—the subject of many dreams, many nightmares—Ladysmith. Around it, here and there, were dotted the enemy's camps and hospitals—only eight miles away—a comfortable walking distance—eight miles ahead of our advanced lines! Ladysmith—an austere

Sir Redvers Buller's Force

queen to be wooed, a fainting beauty to be won—so she had seemed, with lives risked and sacrificed like mere handfuls of sand for the sake of her, for a few yards of approach near to that cestus which engirdled all the grand British blood that had palpitated for our coming, so long, so very long. It was glorious merely to know that Ladysmith was now in sight of the British picquets: there was a sense of exhilaration in the thought of real progress after the ghastly six days at Spion Kop, the fluctuating four at Vaal Krantz, the fourteen in and out and round about the precincts of fatal Colenso. Success was now almost within a stone's throw, and all hearts throbbed with expectation and confidence. All were in some way longing for the handclasp of those beleaguered men. There, in that cup of the hills were kindred; if not kindred, friends; if not friends, comrades in arms—comrades who had belonged to the same old regiments or "ground" with the same "crammers" at the same schools. And even for complete strangers there was a thrill of excitement, almost of exultation, at the prospect of coming in touch with these men, of grasping hands with renowned warriors, every one of whom had helped to illuminate one of the most sumptuous pages of the history of the nineteenth century.

The intense heat, the terrific toil, the unparalleled hardships were forgotten. The energy and dash of the troops, hitherto unfailing, were now redoubled. They had now taken possession of the most important ridge which pointed towards the frowning guardian eminence of the beleaguered concave—Bulwana Hill—and hopes were high and spirits exuberant. There remained but Pieter's Hill between them and the imprisoned multitude. They now saw that the turn of the tide had arrived, and already they looked towards the distressed town, veiled in the haze of distance, and pictured the hour when their long spell of strain and turmoil should meet its reward. In this day's fight, the Queens, the Scots Fusiliers, the Rifle Brigade, and the irregular cavalry had especially distinguished themselves. It was the distinction of endurance rather than of display. The dogged perseverance with which they launched themselves at the positions to be taken, toiling through scrub and thorn, "potting away" at an invisible foe, was more to be applauded than more demonstrative feats of heroism. Colenso and Spion Kop had been showy in their tragedy, but the "fighting march," as it was called, was a feat of superb endurance, of obdurate pluck. A perpetual stumbling and tearing, an eternal pushing up and on against opposition the more terrifying because unseen; the sound of booming, smokeless murderous guns; the sight of maimed or mutilated human beings dropping suddenly under the serene and smiling sky were experiences to test the grit of the toughest and

The Transvaal War

most stoical. A bolt from the blue! That was all. Yet presently there were dead men littered about, and far away, unconscious of their woe, were widows and orphans.

On the 19th, Hlangwane Hill—the impregnable Gibraltar, as it has been called—was taken by the Fusilier Brigade. As this hill, which commanded Colenso, had been evacuated by the enemy—who had left three camps and all their paraphernalia, thousands of rounds of ammunition, and 2000 Maxim automatic shells behind them—we were now free to cross the Tugela. Whether the enemy would continue to fight inch by inch was uncertain, but still there was one subject of rejoicing—the river was ours. The following officers were killed and wounded during this day's operations:—2nd Royal Fusiliers—Killed, Captain W. L. Thurnburn; wounded, 2nd Lieutenant E. C. Packe. 2nd Scottish Rifles—Wounded, 2nd Lieutenant J. M. Colchester-Wemyss.

On the 20th General Hart, after a slight resistance by a weak rearguard, occupied the village, and now the line of the Tugela on the south side from Colenso to Eagle's Nest was in British hands.

Colenso was found to be a desolate ruin. The enemy had evidently tried to make matchwood of the place. Windows and doors told the tale of wanton destruction. They were wrecked past remedy. Houses everywhere were redolent of the Boer, the walls bore traces of his illiterate caligraphy, and his offensive remarks in many tongues amused without disturbing those who read them. They could afford to smile now. And while they went on their tour of investigation the hidden Boers could not resist some sniping shots from their trenches in Fort Wylie, which were only silenced by the forcible arguments of the Naval gunners on Hussar Hill. On this day another trooper of the South African Light Horse (Walters) distinguished himself by swimming across the Tugela and bringing over the pontoon, thus repeating the gallant deed of his comrades at Potgieter's Drift. Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, though peppered by Boers who were ensconced on the kopjes on the opposite side, succeeded in fording the river, and proceeded to reconnoitre the kopjes on the other side. All the guns were gone, and the kopjes themselves seemed to be weakly held. In the distance small clusters of Boers were seen in the act of digging trenches, but it was generally believed that the enemy's tactics were now those of a rearguard action.

Terrible reminiscences of the battle of Colenso greeted them wherever they turned. Fort Wylie was seamed with bombardment. The railway bridge remained a lamentable picture of upheaval. Outside the village, lying as they had dropped, were the rotted carcasses of horses which had fallen victims to the enemy's volleys—fallen in tangled masses, all harnessed together, while making a futile effort



THE RELIEF OF LADYSMITH—THE LAST RUSH AT HLANGWANE HILL.

From a Sketch by René Bull, War Artist.

Sir Redvers Buller's Force

to save the guns of the 14th and 66th Batteries. The trenches, beginning on the very brink of the river, with their protective layers of sandbags and their ingeniously arranged earthworks, told how comfortably and with what immunity from danger the Boers had set about their fell work on the fatal 15th of December. The labour in making Colenso and its surroundings impregnable must have been as immense as it was skilful.

General Hart's advanced guard now proceeded to cross the Tugela, the Boers having vacated all their positions south of the river, and on the 21st he was followed by the 5th Division, who drove back the enemy's rearguard. The enemy had moved north and turned into a strongly fortified line of kopjes midway between the river and Grobler's Kloof, and from thence there was some doubt whether he could ever be displaced. At the approach of the British, he, however, retired precipitately towards Grobler's Kloof.

The crossing, on both days, of the magnificent infantry was apiece with all that had gone before. First came one shell, then another, but the troops steadily pursued their warlike course while the missiles hurtling over their heads exploded in the plain behind them. The great question had been as to where the river should be crossed. Now that the British were in possession of the whole area of Hlangwane and its connecting hills, it was possible to cross either where the river ran north and south, or where it ran east and west. The idea was to cross and get along the line of railroad, and follow a straight course up to Ladysmith. The enemy were believed to be in retreat, and therefore it seemed perfectly feasible to advance in the way attempted.

On the 21st the gunners continued persistently at work, determining that the Dutchmen should have no spare time for the building of further entrenchments. The foe managed, however, to render themselves aggressive by firing on an ambulance train that was steaming out of Colenso station. Meanwhile the army was moving westward from Hlangwane plateau, with a view to marching up beyond the stream, and getting out of the valley of the river and beyond the kopjes that frowned over it.

LADYSMITH

The story of famine is an insidious story, a creeping horror that, scarcely visible, yet slowly and very gradually saps first the spirits, then the energies, then the blood, and finally all the little sparks of being that serve to divide us from the dead. The seal of hunger was set on every action, though there was no complaint. The cramped-up Tommy in his sangar was scarcely as conscious of his risk of danger from shot and shell as of the aching void that assured

The Transvaal War

him how much nature abhorred a vacuum. When he marched, he marched now with the step of one who husbanded his resources ; when he whistled as of old, he ceased abrupt, the lung power being scant and short-lived. His eyes, plucky and Britishly dogged, grew large and wistful, as though looking for something that never came. Dysentery and fever caught him and left him, but left him still in charge of famine, which held him in leading-strings, allowing him his freedom to crawl so far and no farther. Yet daily routine went on as of yore. The shadow of the man went on picket or fatigue duty and met his fellow-shadows as often as not with a jest. In ordinary life you don't look upon cheek-bones as the features of a face. You take stock of eyes, nose, mouth, possibly ears. In Ladysmith a man's character betrayed itself in his cheek-bones and in the anæmic tone of the tanned parchment that was stretched across them. You could read of patience and heroism in the hard, distinct outlines, and comprehend the magnificent endurance of one who, expecting to fight like a devil, was condemned to feed like an anchorite.

The men were very near the barbaric brink of starvation. On one occasion a shell plumped into the mule lines and killed a mule. There was a general rush. Shells followed on the first, crashing all around, but the famished racing throng heeded them not ; their one desire was to get at the slain beast, to capture the wherewithal to stay their grievous cravings. Quickly with their clasp-knives they possessed themselves of great chunks of the flesh, and then, with death hurtling around them and over their heads, they proceeded to carry their prize to safer quarters. Here they determined to have a good "tuck-in." Fires were kindled, and the flesh was toasted and swallowed with lightning rapidity.

For some weeks the inhabitants had been reduced to an essence of horse politely termed Chevril, which was declared to be both palatable and nourishing. The horses, with their ribs shining in painful high lights along their skins, dropped day after day from sheer famine, and were boiled down to meet the pressing demand. Their bones were gelatinous, however wizened their poor flesh.

The horses that were used for food, like those that yet crawled, were mere skeletons. When the General, in view of making another sortie, inquired how many there were in camp that could still carry their rider for six miles, he was informed that there were only twelve equal to the task.

The lack of fat and milk and vegetables was irremediable, but dainties, so called, were provided in curious ways. Blancmange was manufactured from ladies' violet-powder which had been "commandeered" for service in the kitchen, and biscuits were fried by the men in the axle-grease provided for the carts, in hope to make the task of biting them less like crunching ashes.

Ladysmith

The place itself appeared to be becoming the Abomination of Desolation. Many of the dwellings were unoccupied; the low bungalow-shaped villas were closed and barricaded; here and there were buildings cracked and seamed by shot and shell, with great gaps in their faces, reminding one of human beings without eyes and teeth. Melancholy and depression reigned everywhere—on the tangled, desolated gardens, as on the silent, listless men, who had almost ceased to converse, for there was nothing left to converse about. Buller's coming had been discussed threadbare; the prospect of the food holding out had been examined in all its hideous emptiness. Lassitude and weariness was the universal expression on the visages of the hollow-eyed spectres that were the remains of the dashing heroes of Glencoe and Elands-laagte. The land and river-beds presented the appearance of a series of grottoes, shelters of wood, stone, and wire, the dens of wild animals, the caves of primitive man. Between the burrows and caves were sentry-paths and paths to the water-tanks, worn with the incessant traffic of weary feet.

Though affairs were arriving at a sorry pass, there were still some wonderful recoveries. For instance, Captain Paley (Rifle Brigade), who was wounded in both hips, was getting on amazingly. Though the leg was badly shattered near the joint of the hip, there was every reason to hope that it might be saved. Captain Mills, too, was mending. To have a bullet pass through the lung and pierce the spinal column is not a common experience, and one that few recover from; yet the doctors gave hopeful reports. They had scarcely thought that Major Hoare would outlive a fractured skull—completely riddled they said it was—yet the Major was expected to be himself again shortly. These were marvellous cases, and probably the wounded owed their curious recovery to the nature of the weapon of offence. Missiles have peculiar characteristics, and differ in their capacity for deadliness. For instance, bullets of the most harmless kind are those having a high velocity, those that hit apex-first and do not "keyhole," and those possessing a hard, smooth sheath with a smooth, rounded surface. After these come missiles of more death-dealing or mutilating nature—the Dum-Dum bullets, with the nickel sheaths around the apex removed in order to expose the lead nucleus, Remington lead or brass bullets, shrapnel bullets, and fragments of shell. Each and all of these things had been endured by one or other of our gallant men during the course of the campaign, and the surgeons were able to make a profound study of causes and effects. One of the heroes of Ladysmith who went near to testing the efficacy of that most deadly thing, the shell, was Archdeacon Barker. With the utmost presence of mind, he picked up a shell in the act of exploding and plumped it into a tub

The Transvaal War

of water, thus saving many lives. Numbers of officers who had been hit by Mausers or Lee-Mitfords were now pronounced out of danger, among them Colonel C. E. Beckett (Staff), Major F. Hammersley (Staff), Captain W. B. Silver, Captain M. J. W. Pike, Major H. Mullaly, Lieutenants Crichton, S. C. Maitland, W. W. MacGregor (of the Gordons), and A. A. G. Bond. Captain Lowndes, who was wounded dangerously on Surprise Hill, was picking up wonderfully. Lieutenant Campbell, of the Imperial Light Horse, whose case at first seemed serious, was rapidly gaining ground.

Very capricious sometimes was the action of bullets. Some of the injured would have as many as four or five wounds, all "outers," to use their musketry phrase, while others would suffer strange and wonderful things in consequence of the vagaries of a single shot. A strange chapter of accidents befell one officer. He was hit under the left eye, the bullet passing out of his cheek into his left shoulder, and then into his upper arm, which it broke. Not content with doing this damage, the shock of the blow knocked him down, and in falling the unfortunate man broke the other arm! On the other hand, there were some, reported doing well, and expecting to be fit for duty shortly, who were veritably perforated with bullets—"a perfect sieve" one man called himself, with a touch of excusable pride.

The bravery of these men! The bravery of these women! Outside we knew only of the husk of their suffering; but the kernel of it, the bitter sickening taste of it, the taste that lived with them, that was there when they woke, and remained after they had closed their eyes in sleep—that, none but themselves could ever know. Boredom and flies, they jestingly said it was! Rather was it a slow petrification of the soul. Death to them had lost its sting, as life had lost its fire. Ladysmith was the grave of corpses that were not dead, forms in the ceremonies of burial now too weak to knock themselves against the coffin-lid and cry, "Save us! our last breath is not yet spent; we are living, loving men!" Yes, they were too weak. They made no sound, no cry. They who had so long resisted could resist no longer; they, who with their last effort on that fatal 6th of January had been a terror to their enemies, were now only a terror to themselves. Could they bear it longer? Was it possible? Might they not in some fit of madness, some palpitating moment of lust for dear life, begin to spell the letters of the unframable word, begin just to think how it might be spelt?—S—u—r—r— No! They could not get to the end of it! It choked them. They could stand the fetid water, the foul air with its loathsome whispers, its hideous suggestions, which at eventide grew strong as phantoms from the nether world; they could face the sight of virulent disease and gaunt famine stalking

Ladysmith

up and down as the hyena slinks round and about his prey; they could gasp under the fierce heat; they could tune their ears to the racking, rending tortuous explosions of death-dealing shells—they could do all this, but they could not get beyond. The first syllable of the crushing word could never pass their lips!

Food now was only interesting because of its mystery; it was beginning to have merely an ornamental value in the programme. Various "confections" made of violet-powder that had been impounded, strange brawns of mule-heel and suspicious "savouries" were the subject of speculation and awe. People pretended to be pleased and to put a good face on matters, and indeed they had every reason to be thankful; for, owing to the ingenuity of Lieutenant M'Nalty, A.S.C., under whose auspices potted meats, jellies, soups, were manufactured, the imagination if not the appetite was appeased with what, when not too closely investigated, appeared to be quite delectable fare.

The following prices were realised at an auction on February 21:—Fourteen lbs. of oatmeal, £2, 19s. 6d.; a tin of condensed milk, 10s.; 1 lb. of fat beef, 11s.; a 1-lb. tin of coffee, 17s.; a 2-lb. tin of tongue, £1, 6s.; a sucking-pig, £1, 17s.; eggs, £2, 8s. per dozen; a fowl, 18s.; four small cucumbers, 15s.; green mealies, 3s. 8d. each; a small quantity of grapes, £1, 5s.; a plate of tomatoes, 18s.; one marrow, £1, 8s.; a plate of potatoes, 19s.; two small bunches of carrots, 9s.; a glass of jelly, 18s.; a 1-lb. bottle of jam, £1, 11s.; a 1-lb. tin of marmalade, £1, 1s.; a dozen matches, 13s. 6d.; a packet of cigarettes, £1, 5s.; 50 cigars, £9, 5s.; a 1-lb. cake of tobacco, £2, 5s.; ½ lb. of tobacco, £3, 5s.

A doctor, writing home about this time, said:—

"Things are getting very trying here now. For two or three weeks we have had only half a pound of horseflesh and a quarter a pound of very bad mealie-meal bread, with one ounce of sugar. Sometimes a little mealie porridge is added or a little more bread. This is precious low fare, I can tell you, especially as the bread is so bad we can hardly eat it, and it makes us ill. Of course, drinks gave out after the first month, and tobacco followed suit some time ago, but, fortunately, they discovered a little Kaffir tobacco recently, which, vile as it is, we smoke eagerly. Alas! mine won't last long now. It is impossible to get proper food for patients, and not much of improper. Consequently men are beginning to die fast of scurvy, enteric, and dysentery. We have reduced the number of sick from two thousand to seventeen hundred here, of which I have about a hundred severe cases, and am allowed about two to three wine-glasses of stimulants a day for the lot; so you can imagine what a farce that is. Drugs, too, are almost finished, and firewood for

The Transvaal War

cooking is an endless difficulty; so you can imagine I am pretty tired of the daily duty in these terrible fever-tents. About half of our doctors and half the nurses are sick, and there were always few enough. One doctor has already died and a nurse."

Among the severe cases alluded to was one especially to be deplored. Colonel Royston, whose name is intimately connected with Volunteering in Natal, was hopelessly ill. In spite of his iron constitution, he succumbed to the ravages of enteric fever, and was in reality marked by the finger of death at the very time when the relief force was pressing to deliver the town from the awful doom that hung like a miasma over the whole place. The gallant Colonel had done splendid service, and for two decades had worked energetically to promote the welfare of the Colony and stimulate interest in the Volunteer movement. As trumpeter in the Carabineers in 1872, the youth was found engaging in operations against Langalibalele, including the flying column in the Double Mountains and the capture of the chief; and in 1879, in command of a troop of Carabineers, he distinguished himself in the Zulu campaign. Later he accompanied Sir Bartle Frere to the Transvaal in command of the High Commissioner's escort. From 1881 to 1889 he commanded the regiment, and was appointed Commandant of Volunteers in 1898. When the call to arms came, the brave Volunteers of Natal were ready to a man, fully equipped to go to the front—a practical proof of the splendid ability and foresight of their chief. All agreed in deploring his illness, and declared that an officer more fitted to lead the gallant regiment, more trusted and more beloved, it would be hard to find.

THE BATTLE OF PIETERS

On Wednesday the 21st, as we know, our troops were back at Colenso. The day was mainly devoted to "sniping," to bringing up heavy guns, and to getting the troops across the Tugela. But the 12-pounder Naval guns on Hlangwane, and the 61st Howitzer Battery in the open, indulged in a stupendous concert addressed to the enemy's position, in which they were assisted from below Monte Cristo on the right by more Naval guns. The enemy was not inactive. No sooner had a pontoon been thrown across the river below Hlangwane than they began to drop shells in the neighbourhood of the troops who were attempting to cross. These, however, accomplished their intention without sustaining much loss. Meanwhile, Corporal Adams, of the Telegraph Brigade, distinguished himself by swimming across the Tugela, wire in mouth. The troops now advanced—General Coke's Brigade, followed by two battalions of General Wynne's and a field-battery. The Somersets, Dorsets, Middlesex, covered

The Battle of Pieters

by shell-fire from two field-batteries and the heavy guns, moved across the plain to the foot of the hill, with the object of recon-



BALLOON MAP ILLUSTRATING THE BATTLE OF PIETERS
AND RELIEF OF LADYSMITH.

noitring Grobler's Kloof. At first no signs of the enemy were visible, the Dutchmen, though not entrenched, being cunningly

The Transvaal War

hidden in the dongas and thorn-bushes, which crowded the vicinity. But no sooner had the Somersets, who had been the first across the pontoon, approached the base of the hill, than a cataract from the rifles of the enemy suddenly burst over them. The Boers had withheld their fire till the troops were within point-blank range, and then rent the weird mystery of the dusk with jets of flame. Nearly a hundred of the gallant fellows dropped and three officers were killed. Some said that they were fighting the enemy's rear-guard, but in reality a large portion of the whole Boer army was engaged. Though it was the first time the regiment had been under fire, the admirable behaviour of the men in the face of overwhelming hostile numbers was remarkable. Nevertheless, the unpleasant discovery of the enemy's strength at last involved the retreat of the troops, and decided the General that an advance in force must be made on the following day.

The following officers were killed and wounded in the operations of 20th and 21st February :—

1st Rifle Brigade—Wounded, Lieutenant W. R. Wingfield-Digby. 2nd Somersetshire Light Infantry—Killed, Captain S. L. V. Crealock, Lieutenant V. F. A. Keith-Falconer, Second Lieutenant J. C. Parr; wounded, Captain E. G. Elger. 2nd Dorsetshire Regiment—Wounded, Second Lieutenant F. Middleton. 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers—Wounded, Colonel J. Reeves. Staff—Wounded, Captain H. G. C. Phillips. Royal Army Medical Corps—Died of wounds, Captain R. E. Holt.

On Thursday the 22nd, part of General Wynne's Brigade began to advance. They were supported by Hildyard's Brigade from the region of Fort Wylie. (General Barton's Brigade and part of General Hart's were left on the south side of the river.) Progress was slow and painful. The country—a strip some two miles broad and stretching out between high hills and the river—was richly veined with irritating dongas and covered with bushes and scrub. The position was commanded by the wooded slopes of Grobler's Kloof, and enabled the Boers to worry the men in their advance with an enfilading fire. All around were steep kopjes such as the Boer soul delights in, and thorny tangles which afforded comfortable shelter for the enemy's guns. The movement, therefore, was costly, as it was difficult to locate the guns, and the sharpshooters of the enemy, well hidden in their rocky fastnesses, maintained a continuous fire on front and flanks of the advancing force. With their usual wiliness, the Dutchmen had evidently suspended their contemplated retreat, and had gathered together, crept up, and taken up a strong position on the left flank, whence they were enabled to hamper the troops considerably. Nevertheless the Royal Lancasters leading, the South Lancashire following, valiantly advanced towards their objective so resolutely that the Boers, who



MAJOR-GENERAL A. FITZROY HART, C.B.

Photo by Elliott & Fry, London.

The Battle of Pieters

almost to the last stood their ground, pelted off to the sheltering nooks and dongas in the shadow of Grobler's Kloof. Only one remained to face the bayonet. But the losses consequent on this smart day's work were many. Brigadier-General Wynne while conducting operations was slightly wounded, and about a hundred and fifty more were put out of action.

The troops were now moving on a route along the line of river and rail to Ladysmith, half-way between Colenso and Pieters Hill, and with kopjes to be stormed at intervals during the onward course. They had performed a species of zigzag movement, pointing from Chieveley north-east to Cingolo and Monte Cristo, and coming back in an acute line north-west to the river. Now the forward march involved the capture of all the strong positions, beginning with the twin kopjes, Terrace and Railway Hill, and ending with the whole Pieters position, and possibly Bulwana.

On the three hills—Terrace Hill, Railway Hill, and Pieters Hill—rested the Boers' second line of defence. The first hill, called Terrace Hill, lay about a mile and a half to north-east of the right flank. Farther east, divided by a valley, was Railway Hill, so called because on its east came the railway line, on the other side of which was Pieters Hill. Sir Redvers Buller's plan was to advance the infantry beyond the angle of the river, and then stretch round the enemy's left from Railway Hill, and so go straight to Ladysmith. The idea seemed a good one, as the Dutchmen were believed to be moving off; but it was afterwards discovered that they, seeing the assault was not to be made at once upon the weak, the left edge of their position, had gathered courage and returned, reinforced by commandos from Ladysmith, to their well-known hunting-ground on Grobler's Kloof and elsewhere, preparing to give battle so long as there was safety for their extreme left. Most of the night of the 22nd was spent in fighting of desperate character, the Howitzer Battery keeping up an incessant roar, explosion following explosion in the sombre blackness of midnight. The Boers, meanwhile, were attacking with rifle fire all along the line, and so persistent were the Dutchmen in their effort to get rid of the troops, that some even were only repulsed by the bayonet.

Details of that dreadful night's work are scarce, but a faint, yet tragic, outline was given by an officer of the 60th Rifles, who was one of the survivors of the fatal fray. This regiment had moved on the left of Hildyard's Brigade, and were swinging along a boulder-strewn hillside, which, surmounted by a series of uneven and indefinite crest-lines, gave on to a plateau where they intended to take up a line of outposts for the night. It so happened that the Boers had ensconced themselves at the rear edge of the position which the troops, in the belief that it was evacuated, were so incautiously

The Transvaal War

approaching. Accordingly, in the gathering gloom a collision of amazing violence occurred—amazing to both Britons and Burghers, for the former surprisedly plumped upon the Dutchmen, who as surprisedly gave way before them. In an instant the gallant 60th were after the fugitives, charging and cheering, but assailed now by fierce volleys from undreamed-of trenches. This sudden and furious attack forced them, unsupported as they were, to seek cover till reinforcements could arrive. But no help appeared. The plight of the unfortunate band, whose peril had been hidden in the grim density of the night, was entirely unsuspected by the companion forces that fringed the crests in the vicinity, and therefore the unhappy fellows lay all night clinging to the cover of the boulders, and rained on by showers of bullets that traced a tale of agony along the ground. At dawn on the 23rd, no supports having arrived, and under the same fervid fusillade, they began to retire. In twos and threes they commenced to go back, finally covered in their retreat by the East Surreys, who had grandly gone forward to the rescue. But the cost of splendid succour was dearly and almost instantaneously paid. Men fell thick and fast over the hilltop—the Colonel, second in command, and four officers of the East Surrey Regiment dropping one after another, some wounded in many places. Captain the Hon. R. Cathcart, “the rearmost of his command, as he had been foremost of the night before,” dropped dead, and round him within a few moments fifty other noble fellows had passed to the Unknown!

General Buller's orders on the 23rd were brief. Push for Ladysmith to-day, horse, foot, and artillery; both cavalry brigades to cross the river at once. The advance, which had hitherto been slow, was now hurried on. At midday it was in full swing, the cavalry having crossed the Tugela and massed at Fort Wylie. Meanwhile the Boers had taken up a formidable position on the right—on the well-entrenched height called by the gunners Three Knoll Hill, to describe the three hills, Terrace, Railway, and Pieters, that formed the entire position—while on the left they plied their activities from Grobler's Kloof. The artillery in front of Railway Hill concentrated a brisk fire upon the Boers therein entrenched, who returned some animated replies, assisted by other Dutchmen from a hidden vantage-point on the north-east of that eminence. General Hart's Brigade, to whose valiant Irishmen the difficult task of capturing the position was entrusted, was ordered to advance. This advance from Onderbrook Spruit to the base of Terrace Hill, the companion of Railway Hill, was a feat of cool courage that has seldom been equalled. The hill, triangular and standing some three hundred feet above the Tugela, was approached by a wide open space, which was commanded by the Boers, whose

The Battle of Pieters

complicated position on Railway Hill and its component ridges gave them every advantage. The correspondent of the *Standard* furnished a description of these precipitous steeps. "Railway Hill rises from the Tugela a mile from Platelayers' House. It is, perhaps, best described as triangular in shape, with one angle pointing towards the river. It rises from the latter in a series of jagged, boulder-strewn kopjes, until three hundred feet or so above the Tugela. A kloof, through which the railway passes upwards on its way to Pieters Station, separates the last jagged ledge from the hill proper. From the last kopje or ledge, and immediately on the other side of the line, the main part of the hill rises abruptly, almost precipitously, with a sharp edge running back in a north-westerly direction for several hundred yards. The base of this north-westerly line of hill makes up a kloof thick with thorn trees, and this kloof recedes round the left end of the hill to the rear, where the enemy's force, under Commandant Dupreez, had its quarters, while a little farther to the rear is still another kloof, in which the enemy's Creusots were mounted. Along the beginning of the sharp edge referred to a long trench was cut out, and right ahead, as the hill ran still upwards on an incline for three hundred yards or so, were other trenches, until the hill terminated in a crest crowded with commanding fortifications." To assail this formidable stronghold the troops moved off in the following order—the Inniskilling Fusiliers leading, followed by the Connaught Rangers, the Dublin Fusiliers, and the Imperial Light Infantry. Steadily marched the kharki-clad throng, advancing along the railroad in single file with rifles at the slope. At that time there was comparative silence save for the muffled drumming of artillery in the surrounding kopjes. These apparently frowned free of human influence, the dark, dull frown that portends many evil things to the eye of the advancing soldier. But nevertheless the troops moved nearer and nearer to the hill over the open ground by the railway bridge with a steady step and that air of consolidated distinction that marks acutely the difference between Briton and Boer armies. They had no sooner showed themselves in the open than the air grew alive, the trenches on the frowning hill vomited furiously. A casual observer remarked that it reminded him of the pantomimes of his youth, of Ali Baba's cave, when, at a given signal, its jars opened and the forty thieves suddenly—simultaneously—popped up their heads. Only now there were not forty but thousands of brigandish forms—forms that hastened to deal death from their Mausers on the advancing men. These were now coming on at a rush, a rush through the hailstorm whose every shower meant disaster. But Hart the valiant had said, "That hill must be taken at all costs"—and that was enough! The hill was about to be seized and the payments had already begun.

The Transvaal War

One, two, three, four, six—more and yet more down, one after another. So the men began to fall. The ironwork of the bridge had now its fringe of fainting forms. Still the splendid fellows pushed on. Still the air reverberated with the puissant pom-poming of the Boers' automatic gun. This they had turned on to the position they knew must be passed by the advancing warriors. Meanwhile the British artillery was saluting the hill, throwing up to heaven dust and splinter spouts that filled the whole atmosphere with blinding, choking debris, and causing the purple boulders far and wide to give forth rumbling echoes of the infernal rampage.

Gradually, in face of the deluge of shot and shell, the Inniskilling Fusiliers, the Connaught Rangers, and one company each of the Dublin Fusiliers, had wound their way towards the eastern spurs of Railway Hill, and in the late afternoon were ready for the attack. General Hart gave the word. Then, up the rugged stone-strewn heights the troops laboriously began to climb. Soon they reached a point, some hundred yards above, whence the Boers could pepper them with ease. At the same time from the adjacent hill more bullets whizzed upon them. Yet, with this horrible fire on their flanks and the deadly fusillade from the front, they persevered, dropping one after another like ripe fruit in a gust of wind. Volley after volley poured down on them, but up they went, cutting through wire, leaping boulders, and hurling themselves forward, and in such grand style, that the Boers, seeing the determined glitter of the bayonet, thought it wiser to retreat. They receded some two hundred yards up the hill, while the troops occupied the first position. Then, in the growing dusk, the Dutchmen were seen taking a commanding place on a somewhat higher or parent peak of the hill. From this point the Inniskillings, flushed with their first triumph, deemed it necessary to rout them. Fire streamed and spouted, the dim gloom of twilight came on; still the Irishmen, through the mist of evening and flashings furious from every side, advanced along the hill—a glorious, a tragic advance. One after another bit the dust. Men in mute or groaning agony lay prone in the gathering dusk. First went a major, afterwards another, and then two captains of this gallant band. The Boers had known their business. Some of their kopjes are of the nature of spider-webs; the outer fringe involves entanglement; and this especial eminence was of that particular nature that the second Boer position commanded the first. The Dutchmen, even as they receded, were able to mow down the men as they advanced, by a converging fire, against which it was impossible to stand. It was now an almost hand-to-hand struggle between doughty Dutchman and dashing Briton. The Inniskillings were close, but every inch was gained with appalling

The Battle of Pieters

loss to their numbers—indeed, the charging companies might almost have been described as individual men!

Finally, some one gave the order to retire. But how? Most of the valorous band were stricken down, or had perished. The wounded could not be removed. Yet those that remained were too few to hold the ground in the darkness. All that could be done was to retire below the crest and wait till morning. A retirement was attempted, under the personal direction of the Colonel (Colonel Sitwell),¹ but in the course of the movement he was hit, never to rise again. The troops at last got to the cover of the hill, where they built schanzes and bivouacked. But from this point throughout the night firing continued, while the Boers above, between the intervals of dozing, peppered the bivouacs with bullets.

At 7 A.M., while cannonading had elsewhere assumed dangerous proportions, the Irish regiments were again assailed in their schanzes by the persistent Dutchmen. These had crept round the base of the hill and attacked the trenches from the western side. Volleys poured from all directions on a scene that was already deplorable. Only four officers of the Inniskillings remained. Of the Connaught Rangers five officers were wounded. The Dublin Fusiliers had lost their gallant Colonel (Colonel Sitwell), and also Captain Maitland of the Gordon Highlanders (attached). The picture at dawn and on throughout the day was truly appalling. The trenches of the Boers and those of the attacking force were now only some three or four hundred yards apart, and between them was spread an arena of carnage heart-breaking as irremediable. It was impossible for any one to show a nose and live. Wounded lay here, there, and everywhere, heaped as they had fallen, drenched in their own gore and helpless, yet struggling pathetically to edge themselves with hands or knees or heels nearer some place of safety. Dead, too, were entangled with the sinking, huddled together in grievous ghastly comradeship. . . .

For thirty-six hours some of these heroes lay in wretchedness,

¹ Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Claude George Henry Sitwell, D.S.O., 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was born in 1858, and entered the army through the militia in 1878. His first ten years of service were with the Shropshire Light Infantry, from which he exchanged, in 1889, into the Manchester Regiment. He was subsequently promoted to a majority in the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers in October 1898. Colonel Sitwell had seen a considerable amount of active service, his first campaign being the Afghan war of 1879-80, in which he served with the Koorum Division, and took part in the Zaimust expedition. He accompanied the 1st Battalion Shropshire Light Infantry in the Egyptian war of 1882, and was present at the occupation of Kafr Dowar and the surrender of Damietta. From 1892 to 1895 he was employed with the Egyptian army, and from 1895 to 1898 in the Uganda Protectorate. In 1895, as a captain, he commanded the expeditions against the Kitosh, Kabras, and Kikelwa tribes in East Africa, and was present with the Nandi expedition in 1895-96. Finally, he commanded the operations against Mwanga in 1897-98, including the engagement near Katonga River, and several minor affairs. For his important services in Uganda Major Sitwell was given a brevet lieutenant-colonelcy, and decorated with the Distinguished Service Order.

The Transvaal War

hanging between life and death. Mercifully the Boers brought them water, but all their acts were not equally generous. Unfortunately, some misinterpretation regarding the Red Cross flag accentuated the misfortunes of the day.

The Boers, it appeared, had begun by producing one. This signal should have been responded to by our troops, who, however, were not prepared to show another Red Cross flag, which display would have been the signal for truce. This being the case, the Boers, after carrying off their wounded and giving certain of the British wounded some water, removed their rifles. Further, they rifled their pockets and despoiled dead and wounded of boots and other property. Naturally, those who saw them were so infuriated at this wanton behaviour that they began to fire. From this time hostilities recommenced, and the innate cruelty of the Boers was evidenced in several cases. It was stated on the authority of an officer that many of the wounded in act of crawling away were deliberately shot. Let us hope that the aggravation at the non-appearance of the British Red Cross flag was the cause of the ugly display of character on the part of the enemy.

During the late afternoon the worn-out troops in their trenches at the base of the hill were fiercely attacked by the enemy's guns from all quarters. No such effective shell fire had been experienced since Spion Kop. Indeed, with the assistance of Krupps, and Creusots, and Maxims, and other diabolical instruments, the Boers managed to make a fitting concert for Beelzebub. Many of our positions on the lower slopes of the kopjes were enfiladed, and thus many gallant fellows in Hildyard's and Kitchener's brigades were killed. Several officers among those who were fighting on the left also fell, among them Colonel Thorold, Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

At this juncture, finding that the original passage of the river was commanded by entrenchments on every side, and that further advance would be costly in the extreme, the General decided that he must reconnoitre for another passage across the Tugela. This was forthwith discovered. Meanwhile, the day being Sunday, there was an armistice for the interment of the dead on both sides. Grievous were the sensations of those whose duty brought them to the awesome scene of death, who spent the long hours surrounded by sights hideous and forms uncouth, the remains of heroes, discoloured from days of exposure to the sun's scorching rays, to the damps and dews of night—lying limply rigid and rigidly limp in the unmistakable and undescribable abandonment of untenanted clay; or succouring still more pitiable wrecks, wrecks joined perhaps by an invisible handclasp with comrades in the other world, but still here, making a last struggle for the dignity of manhood, or fainting

The Battle of Pieters

slowly, peaceably, beyond all knowledge of pain as of the splendid heroism that had placed them where they were!

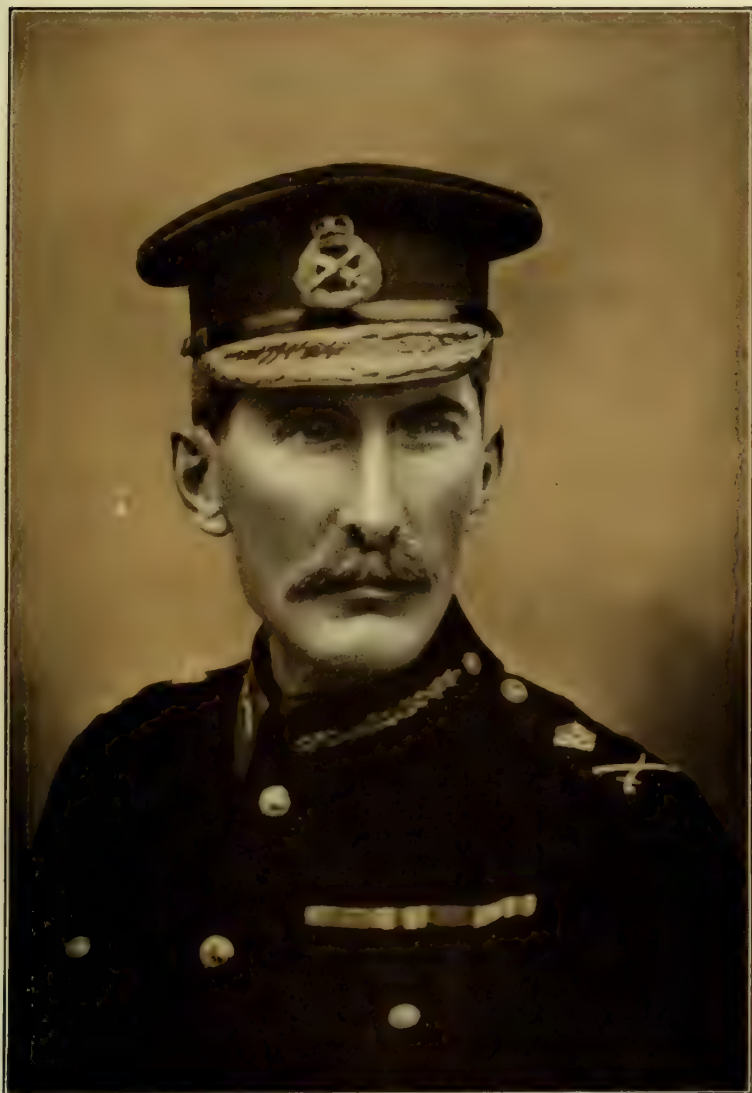
One who was present contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine* a curious account of that armistice—that was not entirely an armistice—of Colonel Hamilton's approach with the flag of fraternity (so often misused and abused by the Dutchmen), and of the strange apparitions that came forth suspiciously one by one from the depths of the hostile trenches. He said: "Seldom have I set eyes on a more magnificent specimen of male humanity than the Commandant of the trenchful of Boers, Pristorius by name, a son of Anak by descent, and a gallant, golden-bearded fighting-man by present occupation; for in far-away Middleburg those mighty limbs—he told it us without any of that stupid deprecation which would probably have characterised a similar confession on the part of an Englishman—were wont to stretch themselves beneath a lawyer's desk. Close on his heels came what a person who had never seen Boers before would have thought the strangest band of warriors in the world—old men with flowing, tobacco-stained, white beards; middle-aged men with beards burnt black with the sun and sweat of their forty years; young men, mostly clean shaven, exhibiting strongly the heavy Dutch moulding of the broad nose and chin; big boys in small suits, suits of all kinds and colours, tweed, velveteen, homespun, and 'shoddy,' all untidy in the extreme, but mostly as serviceable as their wearers." These strange beings formed a strong contrast to the men who joined them, particularly in their attitude when confronted with the ghastly foreground of death which made the prominent feature of the amicable picture. The eye-witness before quoted declared that "it was much more difficult for them to conceal the natural discomposure which all men feel in the presence of the silent dead than for their more artificial opponents. From the airy and easy demeanour of the uniformed British officers, that dreadful plateau might have been the lobby of a London club. A Briton is at all times prone to conceal his emotions, and certainly in this instance the idiosyncrasy gave him a great social advantage over the superstitious Burghers, with their sidelong glances and uneasy shiftings." By-and-by, however, both parties grew even friendly, and the writer went on to describe an animated dialogue between himself and "a deep-chested old oak-tree of a man, whose swarthy countenance was rendered more gipsy-like by the addition of ear-rings. The opening of the conversation had its humours. 'Good-morning!' quoth I. 'Gumorghen,' rumbled the oak-tree sourly. 'Surely we can be friends for five minutes,' I ventured, after a pause. The rugged countenance was suddenly, not to say startlingly, illumined with a beaming smile. 'Why not, indeed! why not, officer! Have you any tobacco?' Out came my pouch,

The Transvaal War

luckily filled to bursting that very morning, and the oak-tree proceeded to stuff a huge pipe to the very brim, gloating over the fragrance of the 'best gold flake' as he did so. The rumour of tobacco had the effect of dispelling the chill that still lingered on the outskirts of that little crowd, and many a grimy set of fingers claimed their share as the price of the friendship of the owners, the Commandant himself not disdaining to accept a fill with a graceful word of thanks. They were out of tobacco in that trench, it appeared, and suffering acutely from the deprivation of what to a Boer is more necessary than food."

Near to the place where they were stricken the Irish heroes were buried. Their last bed was made in a picturesque spot within the whisper of the spray of the river, and sheltered by the low-spreading thorn-bushes. The rest of the day was unusually peaceful, but in the evening the crackle of musketry from left to right of the position taken up by the Durhams again showed that the enemy was on the alert, and it was believed he was preparing for offensive operations during the night. It was discovered, however, that a gallant deed had put any effort to rush the British lines out of his power. Captain Phillips with eight Bluejackets had effectually rendered their searchlight useless, and had, moreover, got safely away after the venturesome act had been perpetrated and discovered.

The new passage was found by Colonel Sandbach (Royal Engineers) at a point below the waterfall on the east, and again guns, baggage, &c., were ordered to be removed to the south side of the Tugela. It may be advisable to note that the armistice mentioned was an informal one, which did not interfere with military movements. Owing to the desperate straits of the wounded on Inniskilling Hill (as the position, baptized in the blood of our heroes, had now been christened), the General had sent in a flag asking for an armistice. The Boers had refused. On condition that we should not fire on their positions during the day, they only consented to allow the bearer companies to remove the wounded and bury the dead. The Boers meanwhile improved their entrenchments, and the British troops, as stated, prepared for the operation of removal across the river. This they at first did with some misgivings, for they had tacked about so many times, but, on the whole, they bore the strain admirably. What with the hammering of Maxims, Nordenfeldts, and the fluting of Mausers, the men had for twelve days past run through the gamut of discomfort. They had been fed up with war. They were in the daytime fried, grilled, and toasted. At night the cold with its contrast had bitten and numbed them. They had bivouacked now in keen chilly blasts, now in intermittent downpours of rain, which had drenched them and made existence a prolonged



MAJOR-GENERAL H. J. T. HILDYARD, C.B.

Photo by C. Knight, Aldershot.

The Battle of Pieters

wretchedness. And nothing had been achieved. Lives only had been lost. But they still munched their bully beef and biscuit with an heroic cheerfulness and resignation that served to astonish and inspirit all who beheld it. There was no doubt about it that the pluck and perseverance of the British Tommy had become subjects for wonder and veneration!

During the night the pontoon bridge was removed from its original position and relaid at the point indicated by Colonel Sandbach. The Boers, watching the commencement of the move, were under the impression that a repetition of the retirements from Spion Kop and Vaal Krantz was to be enacted. They therefore deemed that the movement might be carried out with more expedition did they start a magazine fire at long range at such troops as happened to be between Colenso and the angle of the river. When they discovered, however, that only a portion of the troops had departed, they subsided and reserved their ammunition till morning, when a brisk artillery duel commenced operations—a duel in which the British in quantity and the Dutch in quality of practice distinguished themselves.

General Buller's revised plan was now to avoid the enemy's front, and work back again to the Hlangwane plateau, whence he would start again, having, as it were, made a redistribution of his troops, so that Hart's brigade in its expensively acquired position would now, instead of being his extreme right, become his extreme left. To this end guns and cavalry were removed, Naval batteries being posted on the Hlangwane and Monte Cristo positions, while Hart's brigade was left holding to the skirts, so to speak, of the enemy at Inniskilling Hill, and preventing him from congratulating himself on freedom.

The anniversary of Majuba began in clouds. Guns very early broke into an *aubade*, but awakened few. For there had been little sleep that night. All had dozed in their boots, ready for the worst. The cavalry proceeded to range itself at the northern point of the Hlangwane position, in order that by their guns and long-range rifle fire they might assist the advance of Barton's Brigade. This brigade was the first to start in the attack on the three hills on which the Boer left still rested. The disposition of the forces was as follows:—General Barton's Fusilier Brigade on the extreme right, with Colonel Kitchener's Lancashire Brigade—Colonel Kitchener having taken over General Wynne's Brigade while that officer was wounded—on his left, this latter being on the right of Colonel Northcott's Brigade. Colonel Stuart, working with a composite regiment on the south bank of the Tugela, protected the crossing.

General Barton, with two battalions of the 6th Brigade and the

The Transvaal War

Royal Dublin Fusiliers, crept one and a half miles down the banks of the river, the Scots Fusiliers leading. Here the Tugela flowed between high shelving banks, while above them frowned the three spurs of the great Pieter's position. As usual, these eminences were well ribbed with shelter trenches, and embedded everywhere were Boer sharpshooters, ready to pit cunning against courage, and sniggle at the victory of one over the other. A hot fire commenced on the river-banks while Barton's Brigade advanced gallantly towards its destination. The top of the hill was being raked noisily by the gunners. "Hell was dancing hornpipes



SIGNAL APPARATUS OF H.M.S. *Forte*, MOUNTED ON TRUCK AND USED NIGHTLY TO COMMUNICATE WITH LADYSMITH.

aloft," some one said. However, in the afternoon British bayonets glittered against the skyline, and the thing was done. This, the most wonderful infantry in the world, had ascended precipitous cliffs 500 feet high, assaulted Pieter's Hill, gained the crest, and turned the enemy's left.

This storming of the main position, which was accomplished by the Royal Scots Fusiliers and the Royal Irish Fusiliers, was a remarkable achievement, though the enemy, conscious of their weakness at this point, and knowing how completely they were

The Battle of Pieters

dominated by the Monte Cristo ridge, made no very prolonged opposition. No sooner had the brigade occupied the hill than the disheartened Boers removed in considerable strength to some dongas on the east, whence they continued to be aggressive, and poured a heavy rifle fire on the Fusiliers, whose losses were considerable. They failed, however, to dislodge them. At this time a simultaneous attack was taking place in the region of the two other hills which composed the Pieter's position. These the 4th Brigade under Colonel Northcott and the 11th Brigade under Colonel Kitchener were now assailing with magnificent courage. For two hours every spot on the kopjes had been searched, painted with the noxious hues of lyddite, and seamed with shrapnel, and few Dutchmen there were who cared to remain to welcome the bayonets of Kitchener's braves. Their preliminary advance was scarcely recognisable, kharki and kopje so smoothly blending themselves in one. Then on a sudden, as in the transformation scene when jars become forty thieves or shell-fish become fairies, the boulders took to themselves human shape and human tongue, and up flew a surging, yelling mass of fierce warriors, rushing the hill in the red light of the setting sun. The crest was carried magnificently by the Royal Lancasters, men who had been in the thick of everything for a month past, and who yet maintained their unconquerable British qualities without a flaw; and the Boers, recognising that the game was up, were seen skimming the distance like swallows in flight. Some magnificent service was done by the gunners of the Royal Navy and the Natal Naval Volunteers, service that was especially eulogised by the General, who declared that the losses consequent on the taking of the position might have been far greater but for the efficient manner in which the artillery was served. Be this as it may, an officer said what many echoed, namely, that however deadly our shell fire was, and however instrumental in winning the battle, "No infantry in the world but ours would have crowned such a victory with so much glory." For the Boers at first fought doggedly, relinquishing their hold of trench after trench only when artillery followed by the bayonets of the infantry made their positions untenable. In turn three hills were stormed; in turn cheer on cheer rent the air and travelled along the funnel-like banks of the river, and floated up to the rejoiced ears of those on Hlangwane and Monte Cristo, who had assisted to bring about the devoutly wished for consummation. The song of victory seemed to be taken up by the elements, earth and air and water, and the last flare of the guns of the enemy repeated it. All now knew that the way to Ladysmith was won; that the toil and tribulation, the perplexity and suspense, that had harassed them since the fatal day of Colenso had come to an end! There, right and left, were little black figures scudding

The Transvaal War

away like ants disturbed ; here streams of prisoners who had thrown up hands at glint of bayonet ; on all sides kopjes, kopjes, kopjes—ours, unchallengably ours !

Some idea of the situation may be gathered from the description of a sergeant in the 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers :—

“On the 27th we put the damper on them. . . . You have read, no doubt, of Barton's Brigade deploying to the right early in the day. That deployment was made by crossing the pontoon bridge put up during the night by the Engineers. Instead of climbing up the banks on the opposite side, we crept down the water's edge over huge rocks for about a couple of miles. In the meantime our Naval guns, artillery, Maxims, were all blazing away overhead, and a terrible rifle fire was raging on the left. As we struggled up the steep banks the beggars spotted us, and things began to get lively. We got under a little cover, and blazed away for all we were worth.

“The whole brigade gradually pushed forward from one bit of cover to another, but still the Boers held their ground. About five o'clock in the afternoon the staff passed the word round to charge them out of it. We left our cover, and advanced by half-companies at the double. The company officers were given a point to make for, and as soon as we got in the open it was a case of every man for himself. It was a good 800 yards of open ground where my company had to cross, and, of course, they fired at us for all they were worth. A good many dropped, including A—— and the two subalterns. What with shells bursting and a front and cross fire, it was like a full-dress rehearsal for the lower regions. We got on the hill, and made short work of our Brothers. Needless to say, they didn't all stand for the steel. They kept up a heavy fire on us until long after dark. Orders were passed to hold our own until daylight. As many of the wounded were without water, a terrible night was put in. The shouts for water, mingled with the groans of the dying, the sparks from the Mauser bullets as they struck the rocks, the blackness of the night, &c., fairly made me say my prayers. . . . The stretcher-bearers searching for the wounded carry lamps, and these lamps made a nice target for Brother Boer to snipe at. Daylight came at last, the night mist began to clear away, dead Tommies grinning at dead Boers, wounded men of all sorts, everybody stiff, sore, dirty, and tired. The Boers scooted.”

And the next day came the serene happiness of viewing the Boers in full retreat behind Bulwana and in the direction of Acton Homes, the winding string of waggons trekking away from the scene of past triumphs. The misery, the lives, the pains, the doubts, the disappointments were well repaid by that vision of the

The Battle of Pieters

departing foe, the foe moving off for ever from the strongholds of Natal. All had been accomplished by a blend of pluck, obduracy, and perseverance that can scarcely find its match in the records of British prowess. They had suffered at Colenso, they had tested the deadly summit of Spion Kop. They had backed out from that cruel region with their lives in their hands, and repeated the same process in the equally terrific area of Vaal Krantz. They had come forth smiling, stalwart, staunch as ever, believing and trusting and determining to hew their way through the rocky wilderness sown with destruction and save the 8000 odd of their fellows whose lives verily hung by a thread. And now for fourteen days, each hour fraught with blood and broiling, they had moved on from one dangerous position to a second more dangerous position, till at last, after protracted torment and suspense, they had driven before them the whole horde of adventurous Dutchmen—foes allowed to be the bravest of the brave, if the shiftiest of the shifty. Now they had their reward. The Boers were scrambling to be off—that much they could see of them. It was only in those fleeing moments they saw them at all. At other times, when battle raged warmest, all that was known of the Brother Boer was the shape and number of his bullet!

The following officers were killed and wounded on the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th of February :—

Staff—Wounded, Major-General A. S. Wynne, C.B. 3rd King's Royal Rifle Corps—Killed, Lieutenant Hon. R. Cathcart; wounded, Lieutenant D. H. Blundell-Hollinshead-Blundell and Lieutenant A. F. MacLachlan. 2nd Royal Lancaster Regiment—Killed, Lieutenant R. H. Coë and Second Lieutenant N. J. Parker; wounded, Major E. W. Yeatherd, Lieutenant A. R. S. Martin, Lieutenant F. C. Davidson (since dead), and Lieutenant R. G. D. Parker. 2nd East Surrey Regiment—Wounded, Lieutenant-Colonel R. H. W. H. Harris, Major H. L. Smith, Major H. P. Treeby, Captain F. L. A. Packman, Lieutenant C. H. Hinton, Second Lieutenant J. P. Benson. 1st South Lancashire Regiment—Wounded, Captain B. R. Goren, Lieutenant H. R. Kane, Captain S. Upperton, Second Lieutenant C. H. Marsh. 2nd Devonshire Regiment—Wounded, Lieutenant E. J. F. Vaughan. 2nd Royal West Surrey Regiment—Wounded, Lieutenants B. H. Hastie, H. C. Winfield, and A. E. M'Namara. 1st Rifle Brigade—Wounded, Captain and Quarter-Master F. Stone and Second Lieutenant C. D'A. Baker-Carr. 2nd King's Royal Rifle Corps—Wounded, Lieutenant W. Wyndham and Second Lieutenant G. C. Kelly. 2nd Rifle Brigade—Wounded, Second Lieutenant H. C. Dumaresq. 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers—Killed, Lieutenant-Colonel T. M. G. Thackeray,¹ Major F. A. Sanders, Lieutenant W. O. Stuart; wounded, Major C. J. L.

¹ Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Martin Gerard Thackeray, commanding the 1st Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, was born in 1849, and was appointed to the 16th Foot in 1868. In 1876 he exchanged into the 1st West India Regiment, subsequently obtaining his captaincy in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers in 1881. During 1880 and part of 1881 he served as Fort Adjutant at Sierra Leone. He was promoted to the command of the 1st Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers in February 1897.

The Transvaal War

Davidson, Captain R. M. Foot, Lieutenant J. Evans, Lieutenant J. N. Crawford, Second Lieutenant C. Ridings, Second Lieutenant H. P. Pott, Second Lieutenant J. G. Devenish; missing, Second Lieutenant T. A. D. Best. 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers—Killed, Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel C. G. H. Sitwell, D.S.O.; wounded, Lieutenant A. V. Hill, Second Lieutenant A. Broadhurst-Hill, Second Lieutenant F. B. Lane, Second Lieutenant J. T. Dennis. 2nd Gordon Highlanders—Killed, Captain S. C. Maitland. Imperial Light Infantry—Wounded, Major Hay. 1st Connaught Rangers—Wounded, Lieutenant J. L. T. Conroy, Lieutenant R. W. Harling, Lieutenant H. Moore Hutchinson, Lieutenant A. Wise, Second Lieutenant A. T. Lambert, Second Lieutenant J. M. B. Wratlaw, Captain E. M. Woulfe Flanagan (5th Battalion, attached). Royal Welsh Fusiliers—Killed, Lieutenant-Colonel C. C. H. Thorold,¹ Lieutenant F. A. Stebbing; wounded, Second Lieutenant C. C. Norman and Second Lieutenant H. V. V. Kyrke. 2nd Royal Fusiliers—Wounded, Lieutenant R. H. Torkington.

The following casualties occurred on the 27th of February :—

Killed.—1st South Lancashire Regiment—Lieutenant-Colonel W. M'Carthy O'Leary.² 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers—Brevet-Major V. Lewis, Captain H. S. Sykes, Second Lieutenant F. J. T. U. Simpson. 1st Royal Warwickshire Regiment—Lieutenant H. L. Mourilyan. Second Royal Irish Fusiliers—Second Lieutenant C. J. Daly.

Wounded.—Major-General Barton. 2nd Scots Fusiliers—Lieutenant-Colonel E. E. Carr, Captain C. P. A. Hull, Captain E. E. Blaine, Lieutenant C. H. I. Jackson, Second Lieutenant H. C. Fraser. 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers—Major F. F. Hill, Lieutenant A. G. Knocker, Second Lieutenant A. Hamilton, Second Lieutenant V. H. Kavanagh. 1st South Lancashire Regiment—Major T. Lamb. 2nd West Yorkshire Regiment—Captain C. Mansel Jones, Captain C. C. B. Tew, Lieutenant L. H. Spry, Lieutenant A. M. Boyall. 2nd Derbyshire Regiment—Lieutenant H. S. Pennell, V.C. 2nd Royal Lancaster Regiment—Captain G. L. Palmes, Second Lieutenant C. W. Grover, Lieutenant E. A. P. Vaughan. 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers—Second Lieutenant G. R. V. Steward. 1st Rifle Brigade—Captain and Adjutant S. C. Long, Second Lieutenant J. L. Buxton. 2nd Royal Fusiliers—Lieutenant H. B. G. Macartney. 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers—Lieutenant J. M'D. Hastard, Second Lieutenant De B. Bradford.

¹ Lieutenant-Colonel Thorold, of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, who was killed on February 24, became lieutenant on June 13, 1874, a captain on October 25, 1882, a major on July 10, 1890, and was promoted to be lieutenant-colonel on March 4, 1896.

² Lieutenant-Colonel William M'Carthy O'Leary, commanding the 1st Battalion of the South Lancashire Regiment, was born on January 6, 1849, and entered the 82nd Foot (now the 2nd Battalion of the South Lancashire Regiment) as an ensign in the old purchase days on April 17, 1869. He obtained his lieutenantancy, also by purchase, on February 15, 1871. He was instructor of musketry to the regiment from July 19, 1874, to March 19, 1878, when he became captain, received his major's commission on August 13, 1883, and from the January preceding until January 1888, was an adjutant of Auxiliary forces. He had been lieutenant-colonel of the battalion since November 1896. He was a Justice of the Peace for the County of Cork and one of the Under Sheriffs of the city.

Expectation

EXPECTATION

"Gloom, gloom, gloom, unending gloom!" So said one on the 26th of February, one who was fast sinking in the slough of despondency into which so many had slipped lower and lower, till they were sucked down and ended their troubles with fever and the grave. Some few days before all hearts had leapt with joy at reading of hopeful signals, listening to booming guns, which all thought to be bursting the gates of their imprisonment. So certain were they that the joyful hour of freedom was at hand that the force was placed on full rations. "We can afford to have a blow-out now,"



KING'S POST, THE ENTRENCHED POSITION OF 2ND BATT. RIFLE BRIGADE AT LADYSMITH.
(Reduced facsimile of sketch by Melton Prior.)

some one had said, and began to arrange what menu he should chose when he at last came face to face with civilisation. Then had come gloom—gloom blacker than Erebus—for it was gloom without and within. The guns—the welcome guns—not the obstreperous ones of Bulwana and the companion hills—had ceased their clamour. Hope was gone, and even the "helio" refused its communications. The sky was overcast, and rumours, that had always been prolific as flies, now began to breed apace. The air of Ladysmith was thick with them. No word from Buller's column. Kaffirs hinted that for the fourth time the relief column had retired at the back of the

The Transvaal War

Tugela. Doubt, anxiety, suspense set in with renewed terrors. Quarter rations—the more trying because temporarily dropped—again became the order of the course. This in spite of the fact that Buller had now signalled “Everything progressing favourably.” It seemed that they had heard that message before, those poor, half-hopeful, half-sceptical sufferers.

Some said that on Tuesday, Majuba Day, the spirits of the community arrived at their nadir. When the barometer of fate registers its lowest, it is bound to rise. It rose in skips and jumps. There came the grand news that Cronje had surrendered to Lord Roberts. It was evident that the Boers too had heard, understood, and decided that they must scuttle the next morning. Signs of disturbance were evident. Long serpentine lines of trekking waggons were throwing up dust columns in the roads leading to Modder Spruit and Pepworth; droves of oxen were hurried along as fast as hoofs would carry them. Guns—the terrible guns which for 118 days had bayed and barked and rumbled and thundered—were in course of being dismantled. What did it all mean? Time was when the “braves” in Ladysmith would have sallied forth with their inherent dash and turned the retreat into a rout. But things were changed. Men and horses were now almost too weak to enter into sustained conflict with a mosquito, had a mosquito deigned to look at them. But most of them were past even the attentions of mosquitos. All they could do was to send a salvo at the heels of their tormentors, and hope that one or two shells at least might serve to “speed the parting guest.” This was all they could attempt. They also flashed to Monte Cristo a message—a deplorable message—full of their despair and despondency. It said, “Garrison bitterly disappointed at delay of relieving force.” This was at twelve o’clock. Then, as though Fate, with a full appreciation of the picturesque, had placed her highest light against her deepest dark—then, within the hour, came back glorious news!

“Have thoroughly beaten the enemy. Believe them to be in full retreat. Have sent my cavalry to ascertain which way they have gone.” Surprise, rapture, prolonged jubilation! Cheer on cheer rose on the clear midday air and rang for miles, till the sick in Intombi camp lifted pallid heads and strained their ears and wondered. Then came the rolling National Anthem and “Rule Britannia,” and Sir George White and those around him who had grown old within the spell of those awful 118 days, began to grow young again. And soon the Jack Tars set to work and the Naval guns pounded away with a reckless disregard for ammunition and a zest that did them credit. “One more go at him!—only one more!—only one more!” and “Long Tom,” which was in act of being dismantled, was the subject of boisterous farewells.

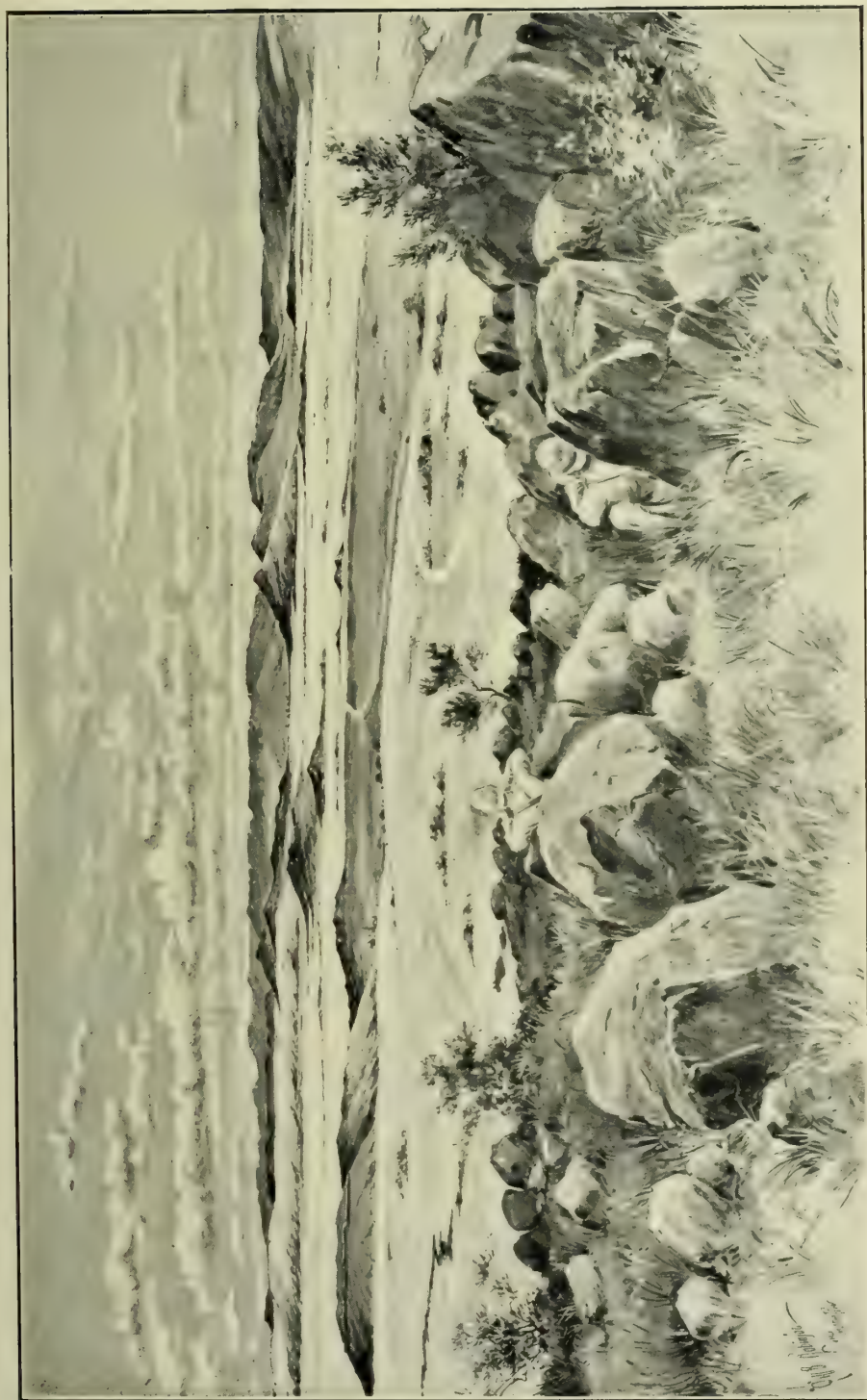
Boer Laager.

Stion Kop.

Direction of
Colenso.

Rifleman's Ridge.

King's Post.



IN BELEAGUERED LADYSMITH—WATCHING FOR BULLER FROM OBSERVATION HILL.

From a Sketch by Melton Prior.

The Relief of Ladysmith

THE RELIEF OF LADYSMITH

At six o'clock on the evening of the 28th of February all the suffering, suspense, and tension came to an end. The obstinate resistance, the heroic combats, the semi-starvation, the appalling melancholy of enforced exile, all were over.

In the late afternoon those viewing the departure of the Boers from a vantage-point at Cæsar's Camp espied along the hazy blue of the valley horsemen recklessly approaching, riding at full gallop across the open. Conjectures wild were attempted. Hearts began to flutter, to stand still, to beat again with sharp quick thuds. Boers? Or Buller's cavalry? Yes—no—yes! Hurrah! Hurrah! They were coming—the squadron was distinctly visible—they were making direct for Ladysmith. A roar went up from a multitude of throats. The Manchesters on Cæsar's Camp, the Gordons at Fly Kraal, and presently the troops in the town, broke into shouts of exultation. Soon it was known everywhere they were coming—coming—coming—at last—at last! It was quite true. There was Lord Dundonald with Major Mackenzie (Light Horse) and Major Gough (16th Lancers), accompanied by the little column of Colonials, grand gallant fellows of the Light Horse, Natal Carabineers, and Border Mounted Police, some three hundred of them, pounding across the open country as fast as horses would carry them.

In the twilight the troops sped along over boulder and rock, down donga and ravine, reckless of every obstacle, and at last the melancholy perimeter was reached. Then from out the gloom came a challenge. A British voice called "Halt! Who goes there?" A British voice gave answer—the almost unbelievable answer—"The Ladysmith Relieving Army." Four words, just four words! Paradise seemed to be opened. From all quarters came crowding and cheering—cheering faintly with wizened voices of the famished—men battered and almost bootless—happy, yet for all that deplorably sad in their happiness. Tears even glistened on some cheeks and in some eyes—the "unconquerable British blue eyes" of the Ladysmith "invincibles." With a due sense of decorum, and in the determination to give none the precedence, the procession had arranged itself in special order. The Natal Carabineers and Imperial Light Horse riding two and two abreast, with Major Gough at the head of the column, now marched in triumph into the town.

At the English church they were met by General White, the defender of Ladysmith, fevered and thin and grey-haired, yet erect with the carriage of one who, without the strength, has the inextinguishable pride of his race, and the will to bear his country's burden to the last. With him were General Hunter and Colonel Ian Hamilton, heroes of the defence. Each instant the scene

The Transvaal War

gained in colour, in vehemence, in pathos. Cheers and tears were commingled. Women wept unreservedly. Men, to dispose of a lump in their throats, shouted with all the scanty vigour that a limited diet of horse-sausage and mule would allow. But new life coursed through their veins. There was no glow of health on their cheeks, but the gleam of joy in their eyes rendered them young, almost hale. The Kaffirs and coolies gave expression to their rapture by dances and shouts that relieved the almost solemn ecstasy of the moment. Then General White, surrounded on one side by his pallid, worn, and wounded heroes, on the other by the bronzed warriors of the relieving force, made a brief address to the crowd: "People of Ladysmith," he said, in a voice that wavered with the emotion it was needless to conceal—"People of Ladysmith, I thank you one and all for the patient manner you have assisted me during the siege. From the bottom of my heart I thank you. It hurt me terribly when I was compelled to cut down rations, but, thank God, we have kept our flag flying!" Cheers broke out afresh, and then the battered multitude with one voice rent the grey gloom of the evening, and the strains of "God save the Queen" rang forth, till the banks, hollows, and rocks of the surrounding country gave back the glorious refrain. That night Sir George White, with his valorous colleagues around him, gave a dinner to the newly arrived, and these sat down with a feeling of exaltation, almost of awe, to find themselves thus in the familiar company of heroes. And all were conscious of a strange sense of unreality which pervaded the scene. It was almost impossible to realise that the drama was played, that they were about to ring down the curtain on the last act. It was scarce possible to believe that for three months the Natal Field Force had kept at bay a force double its number, had fortified and held a perimeter of fourteen miles against the most fiendish inventions of modern artillery, had made brilliant sorties and repulsed assaults innumerable—two of them being ferocious, almost hand-to-hand combats—had fought and watched and sickened and starved. . . . And now, all was changed. Those dire experiences were over for ever!

Yet the effect of them remained. As a consequence of the close confinement of some 20,000 persons, disease was stalking abroad, even attacking those who but an hour ago had neared the place. Away at Intombi camp, too, where drugs were scarce, many of the patients—convalescent patients—were sinking for want of the sustaining food which was necessary to recovery. There was regret, poignant and newly awakened, in this moment of relief, regret standing dry-eyed, yet with a grievous ache at the heart—regret that before had learnt to bear and be still. It was impossible to see the glad side without also remembering the deeply pathetic

The Relief of Ladysmith

one. The pestiferous atmosphere breathed of fever and disease, and those coming into it realised only too well what havoc such an atmosphere must have played on the sickly and the starved. Besides this there were gaps—woeful gaps. Names that dared not be mentioned, spots that could scarce be looked upon with dry eyes. The bronzed warriors, who day after day had shown tough fronts to the enemy, and whose ceaseless struggles should have hardened them to emotion, now turned aside to conceal the agony of bleeding hearts.

Outside the town, in a sheltered hollow below Waggon Hill, was a pathetic garden of sleep. Here, under the shadow of cypress trees, lay the honoured remains of brave fellows who had given themselves to save the town, and with the town the prestige of their motherland. The earth barely covered them, but for all that their peace was perfect. They had struggled to save Natal, and Natal through them and the survivors was saved. If there is a loophole whence those who have passed on to the Invisible can peer down and observe the issues of mortal deeds, surely in that great hour, those splendid, those self-abnegating ones, who had given their heart's blood for the glory of the Empire, must then have gazed their fill, and in the general rejoicing have reaped their beatific reward.

The effect in England of the news of the relief was truly surprising. The spectacle was unique in the annals of Victoria's reign. On Thursday the 1st of March the whole City of London by one consent burst into jubilation. Every human being, however hard-worked, wore a smile; every heart, however sore, throbbed with a sense of reflected triumph; for all, if they had not been at the front in the flesh, had been there in the spirit these many, many days. Never was such a spontaneous outburst of rejoicing! A nation of shopkeepers indeed! Why, shopkeeping and work of all kinds were forgotten, and in front of the Mansion House crowded the delighted multitudes, oblivious of everything save the glorious fact that British bull-dog tenacity had withstood the most fiendish warfare, and wiles, and wickedness that vengeful Dutchmen could invent.

From north, south, east, and west the people flocked, springing as it were from the very earth. The news came in at 10 A.M. By eleven the City was alive with drama. Hats were being waved or flung into the air, regardless of the effect upon the nap; flags from here, there, and everywhere fluttered—in default of these, other brandishable things were seized. Sometimes handkerchiefs did duty, newspapers, and even parcels and commercial bags; and from tongues innumerable came cheers and shouts and snatches of

The Transvaal War

patriotic song, till an ignorant spectator, if one such there could have been, might have imagined Bedlam to have broken loose. "Rule Britannia," "God save the Queen," "Tommy Atkins," "The Absent-Minded Beggar"—all tunes poured forth to an accompaniment of cheers. The Lord Mayor was called out, and appeared on his balcony. He was forthwith invited to speak. The great man opened and shut his mouth—he was much moved with the general emotion—but no sound penetrated the uproar. Cheers loud and vehement tore the air, and the walls of the civic domain literally shook with the inspiring fracas. Then for a moment or two there was a lull, and taking advantage of the opportunity, in a short sincere speech the Lord Mayor expressed himself.

"Fellow-citizens, this news of the relief of Ladysmith makes our hearts leap with joy. We are now satisfied that at last our sacrifices of blood and treasure are not in vain!"

Upon that the crowd roared itself hoarse, sung "For he's a jolly good fellow," and never with better cause, for Sir A. J. Newton had put the best of himself into the launching of the glorious C.I.V.'s. By-and-by came, with banners and much ceremony, a deputation from the Stock Exchange, and after them waves on waves of shouting enthusiasts—a spectacle so un-English, so genuine, so unrestrained, that the gloomy decorous regions of the City seemed suddenly to have become things apart, card-houses to fill in the background to a soul-stirring scene. Everywhere, in the alleys of "Arriet," in the haunts of the "wild, wild West," at the Bank, in Leadenhall Market, and along the Thames, went up the jubilant echo—"Ladysmith is relieved!" Whereupon windows and balconies were dressed, flags, red, white, and blue, and the green of Erin with its romantic harp in the corner, fluttered wings of ecstasy from every British nest, and from every British household there rose unanimously a rapturous cry that was almost a sob, a cry of thanksgiving that the end had come, and that Ladysmith and the honour of the old country were saved!

THE FORMAL ENTRY

It seemed but artistic that Lord Dundonald and his brave irregulars should have met the keen edge of joyous welcome, that the burst of enthusiasm which greeted them should have been the heartiest of which Ladysmith, after a siege of 118 days, was capable. It was right, almost beautiful, that the staunch Colonials, who so well had fought for the Empire, should be the ones to throw open the doors of the dolorous prison, and deliver those who had been not only victims to the devilish machinations of the Boer, but had suffered from the active ache of suspense and the passive



BRIGADIER-GENERAL THE EARL OF DUNDONALD, C.B.

Photo by R. Faulkner & Co.

The Formal Entry

one of starvation, from their hellish bondage. Their informal coming was part and parcel of the unrehearsed and the splendid that appeared at every corner in this absolutely incomprehensible war.

The next day things were more decorously done—more English in their reserve. Etiquette and custom resumed their sway, and General Sir Archibald Hunter straightened out the limp backbone of the army, and made soldierly preparations to welcome the relief column. There were cleansings and polishings, washings and brushings up, of a ramshackle kind, it is true, but they savoured of the old parade days returned. Poor skeletons of horses were groomed down, Sunday best was smoothed out, everything was done that the slender resources of the melancholy perimeter would allow. Shortly after noon on the 3rd of March Sir Redvers Buller made his formal entry. His arrival was somewhat unexpected, and there was little effervescent demonstration. Sir George White and Sir Redvers Buller meeting with a handclasp, said at first little more than the familiar "D'ye do?" of saunterers in Piccadilly. What else could be done? There was much to say, so much that must remain ever unsaid, and throats to-day were too tightly compressed in strangling the large and unspeakable emotion to give vent to the infinitesimal resource of speech. Meanwhile the forlorn streets had begun to fill. They were margined by the garrison, and with them were collected such of the sorry civilians as were able to stand exposed to the tropical glare of the sun in its zenith. They came out wondering, almost diffident. Was it possible that the morning message of melenite was no longer to be heard? that the hoarse cadence of hostile artillery was silent for good? Was the open distance really innocuous—clear and peaceful as a Swiss landscape? They scarcely recognised themselves or their surroundings, and looked dazedly to right and left as on a changed world. Sir George White, with his staff, now took up a position in front of the Town Hall, where, backgrounded by the ruined tower—it had been battered, as it were, by the whole armoury of Satan—the broken blue tin houses and the parched trees, the group made an appropriate picture of noble wreck—of aristocratical exhaustion. The relievers, though physically hale, were externally scarcely more presentable than the relieved. The outsiders, it is true, were begrimed and tattered, though robust and swarthy; while the Invincibles, rigged up in honour of their deliverers in Sunday best, and washed and scrubbed to a nicety, seemed—soap-like—to have dissolved in the very process of ablution. No joy of the moment could alter the tale of shrinkage that was printed on man and beast. But jubilation expressed itself in the best way it could. From windows and balconies soon hung strips of colour, national emblems, gathered from hither and thither to mark a rapture that it was impos-

The Transvaal War

sible for human tongue to describe. From hotels and habitations the citizens began to pour forth and to congregate. And then, when all were collected, the curtain drew up on the most wondrous scene that the nineteenth century has witnessed—the march past of the Ladysmith Relieving Column! Sir Redvers Buller, imperturbable of visage as usual, accompanied by his staff, rode at the head of his magnificent warriors, and leading, in the place of honour, were the valorous Dublin Fusiliers, the poor but glorious remnant, consisting now of 400 of the original battalion who had so grandly acquitted themselves in many battlefields. Next came Sir Charles Warren and the Fifth Division, and afterwards General Barton and General Lyttelton's Brigades—goodly fellows all, who had proved themselves deliberately brave and doughtily undefeatable. Meanwhile the pipes and drums of the Gordon Highlanders, with such vigour as was left them, made exhilarating music, to which was united the clanking and clamping of the Artillery Howitzer Battery and Naval Brigade as they filed past with uproarious martial rampage. Each section was greeted with admiring cheers. The regiments moved along in review order, a superb throng, bronzed, and battered, and brawny, a curious contrast to the pallid and emaciated comrades-in-arms—morally superb too, but physically degenerate—who welcomed them. The spectacle was unique in soul-stirring grandeur as in unspoken pathos.

“A march of lions,” said Mr. Churchill, who had played his part with Lord Dundonald's force, and was now looked on as a critic. “A procession of giants,” said some one else, who watched the lines and lines of heroes greeting each other with wild huzzas! Friends, kindred, comrades-in-arms—from either side the yawning gulf of destruction, from even the voracious maw of death—they came together again, all jubilant, all generously appreciative, all self-respecting, and glowing with honest and honourable emotion. The Gordon Highlanders cheered the Dublins, the Dublins, with little sprigs of green in their caps, responded right royally to the greeting of the Scotsmen. One battalion of the Devons met its twin battalion: the men of doughty deeds, large-hearted and large-lunged, accosted with zest the men of equally doughty deeds but dwindled frames, whose deep bass notes cracked with the strain of rollicking intention and futile realisation.

While all this was going forward, from the balcony of the gaol a wondering crowd of Boer prisoners looked on agape. They could barely believe the evidence of their eyes: the town was free. Had their compatriots at last turned tail and bolted? They stared down on the vast interminable avenue of men and guns winding through what only the day before yesterday was a fiery concave—watched a continuous moving multitude, tattered and begrimed,

The Formal Entry

saddle-brown and burly—and little by little began to fathom the meaning to themselves of this mighty display. The despised rooineks had, after all, not even been thrust into the sea: in fact, it appeared that the sea had cultivated a trick of casting up rooineks by the thousand, to be killed in scores only to come up in swarms!

By-and-by, when the military parade was over, the Mayor of the town, Mr. Farquhar, presented Sir George White with an address, in which the corporation and inhabitants expressed their appreciation of all that he had done for them in those dark days of durance. Flattering reference was also made to the services of General Hunter and Colonel Ward (A.A.G.). To these officers the General, in reply, alluded gratefully, eulogising the work done by the former, and describing the latter as the “best supply officer since Moses.” He then called attention to the stubborn patience of the civilians of Ladysmith, “who had borne themselves like good and true soldiers throughout a very trying time.” These remarks were followed by three hearty cheers for the civilians of Ladysmith. The Mayor expressed his pride in the manner the civilian population had comported itself, and the excellent feeling that had existed between both civil and military authorities. He then presented an illuminated address to Sir Redvers Buller, of which the following is the text:—

“We, the Mayor and members of the Town Council of the borough of Ladysmith, Natal, and as such representing the inhabitants of the said borough, beg most respectfully to welcome with great joy the arrival of yourself and your gallant soldiers at our township, and to express to you our most sincere and heartfelt appreciation of your noble and courageous efforts in the relief of this long-beleaguered borough. As members of the great British Empire, as loyal subjects of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, and as colonists of Natal, we beg respectfully to tender you our most hearty thanks, realising as we do the magnitude and difficulty of the work you have accomplished. At the same time our sympathies are great for the heavy losses among your gallant troops that have occurred in your successful efforts to relieve us.”

The following telegrams were sent to Sir Redvers Buller and Sir George White by the Queen.

To Sir Redvers Buller:—

“Thank God for news you have telegraphed to me.

“Congratulate you and all under you with all my heart.

“V.R.I.”

To Sir George White:—

“Thank God that you and all those with you are safe after your long and trying siege, borne with such heroism.

“I congratulate you and all under you from the bottom of my heart.

“Trust you are all not very much exhausted.

“V.R.I.”

The Transvaal War

Reply from Sir George White to the Queen :—

"Your Majesty's most gracious message has been received by me with deepest gratitude and with enthusiasm by the troops.

"Any hardships and privations are a hundred times compensated for by the sympathy and appreciation of our Queen, and your Majesty's message will do more to restore both officers and men than anything else.

"GENERAL SIR GEORGE WHITE, Ladysmith."

The following telegram was received by the Queen from Sir Redvers Buller :—

"Troops much appreciate your Majesty's kind telegram.

"Your Majesty cannot know how much your sympathy has helped to inspire them.

"GENERAL BULLER."

An additional telegram was sent by the Queen to Sir Redvers Buller on the 2nd inst. :—

"Pray express to the Naval Brigade my deep appreciation of the valuable services they have rendered with their guns.

"V.R.I."

Later on a special Army Order was issued as follows :—

GALLANTRY OF IRISH REGIMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA—DISTINCTION TO BE WORN ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

Her Majesty the Queen is pleased to order that in future, upon St. Patrick's Day, all ranks in her Majesty's Irish regiments shall wear, as a distinction, a sprig of shamrock in their headdress, to commemorate the gallantry of her Irish soldiers during the recent battles in South Africa.

Soon after this came the transformation scene. Seventy-three waggon-loads of supplies, eleven of which contained hospital comforts, began to wind into the town. Major Morgan and Colonel Stanley, like fairy godmothers in the story-book, waved the wand of office, and promptly the machinery began to revolve, and manna in the form of nourishing food-stuffs poured into the famished regions. The Boers, too, in the precipitate retreat had left welcome loads of grass, herds, and ammunition—the ammunition of the besieged was well-nigh exhausted—besides individual necessities which came in handy. But of course, the machinery of relief, well as it worked, could scarcely work fast enough to make an appreciable result, and save invalids who were sinking from the protracted trial. It was amazing how the sick-list swelled. Many who had come into the town jocund and jaunty, found themselves in a few hours clutched by the fell fever. It was enough but to breathe the tainted atmosphere to fall sick, and those who were seized at once discovered all the horror of helplessness in an area where provision for the comfort



LIEUT.-GENERAL HON. N. G. LYTTELTON, C.B.

Photo by Elliott & Fry, London.

The Formal Entry

of the suffering was well-nigh exhausted. Looking back on the past from the new standpoint, the gaps became more than ever remarkable; for, despite incessant fighting, shot and shell were responsible for less lives than famine and fever.

Ladysmith at the commencement of the siege held some 13,496 fighting men and over 2000 civilians. Owing to sickness and hard fighting, the number had diminished to 10,164 men. There were about 2000 in hospital, but the death-rate practically increased only when, after January, food, nourishment of all kinds, and medical appliances grew scarce. At that time sickness of whatever kind assumed an ominous aspect; there was no chance of relief. It was impossible for languishing men to apply themselves to the soup made of old horse and mule, which was gladly devoured by those who had still the appetite without the means of appeasing it. From the 15th of January death stalked abroad uncombated; later he held carnival. Many died from wounds, very slight wounds, received on the 6th of January, from which they had not stamina to recover; the fevered and weakly dropped off from sheer starvation and famine; the gaunt talons needed scarcely to touch them, for they were exhausted, and some of them were glad to go. The deaths as a result of fighting were 24 officers and 235 men, while those attributed to sickness numbered six officers and 520 men, exclusive of white civilians.

The following special Army Order was issued:—

“The relief of Ladysmith unites two forces which have striven with conspicuous gallantry and splendid determination to maintain the honour of their Queen and country. The garrison of Ladysmith for four months held the position against every attack with complete success, and endured its privations with admirable fortitude. The relieving force had to make its way through unknown country, across unfordable rivers, and over almost inaccessible heights, in the face of a fully-prepared, well-armed, tenacious enemy. By the exhibition of the truest courage, which burns steadily besides flashing brilliantly, it accomplished its object and added a glorious page to our history. Sailors, soldiers, Colonials, and the home-bred have done this, united by one desire and inspired by one patriotism.

“The General Commanding congratulates both forces on their martial qualities, and thanks them for their determined efforts. He desires to offer his sincere sympathy to the relatives and friends of the good soldiers and gallant comrades who have fallen in the fight.
BULLER.”

Less formally and with more warmth the Chief addressed himself to his friends in England. He said:—

“We began fighting on the 14th February, and literally fought every day and nearly every night till the 27th. I am filled with admiration for the British soldiers; really, the manner in which they have worked, fought, and endured during the last fortnight has been something more than human. Broiled in a burning sun by day, drenched in rain by night, lying but 300 yards off an enemy who shoots you if you show as much as a finger; they could hardly

The Transvaal War

eat or drink by day, and as they were usually attacked at night they got but little sleep; and through it all they were as cheery and willing as could be."

Telegraphic wires and cables wore themselves out in repeating congratulation on the relief of Ladysmith. Veritably all the winds of heaven seemed to repeat them. From north, south, east, and west came the chorus of acclamation, a chorus most reviving to the magnificent multitude both inside and outside the place, who had been ready to offer up their heart's blood on the altar of patriotism. Though the haunted and worn look could not die out of the faces of the sufferers in a moment, they had already begun to mend; though the shrunken and emaciated forms could not at once be relieved from the starvation and disease which had wasted them, there was over all a soothing glow of hope that acted magically, beatifically, as the mists of sunrise over a squalid landscape.

On the 9th of March Sir George White, looking much worn, he having suffered from Indian fever brought on by the malarious surroundings, left with his staff. The General addressed the Gordon Highlanders who formed the guard of honour, and in few and affecting words bade them farewell.

CHAPTER VI

CHANGES IN CAPE COLONY

WE must now return to Colesberg after the departure of General French. The Boers, doubtless much relieved to get quit of him, still occupied a semi-circular set of camps from east to west round the north of the town, while the British, in the same manner, occupied the opposite half of the circle, and so continued, by dint of much fighting and skirmishing, to keep them in check. On the 9th February the Dutchmen threatened the right flank of the British, and shot one of Rimington's Guides. During the morning Captain Cameron, commanding the Tasmanian Contingent, with Captain Salmon and fifty Australians and Tasmanians, started out from Rensburg on a reconnaissance. He was supported by a detachment of the Inniskilling Dragoons under Captain Stevenson-Hamilton. The enemy was soon encountered, and promptly gave the Australians a warm time as they advanced across the plain. These cleverly took shelter and returned an active fusillade, but the Boers seemed to be everywhere in overwhelming numbers. The Australians with great gallantry took possession of a kopje, and maintained their grip of the position for a good hour and a half; but the crowds opposing them were too great, and when the Dutchmen worked round to the rear and fired on their horses, they thought it high time to come down, mount, and retire, amid a hurricane of lead from the foe. The same action was repeated, the holding of another kopje, and the evacuation of it in consequence of the arrival, in the rear, of the Boers; and finally a retirement had to be effected across the open plain exposed to fierce volleys from the pursuing enemy. Strange to say, very few of the Colonials were injured, though they held their ground throughout the day with wondrous pluck, and tackled the Boers with dexterity equal to their own. Indeed, the coolness and courage of Captain Cameron were reflected by his men, and Captain Salmon, whose baptism of fire it was, made a remarkable display of talent in the field. Of grit and gallantry there was no end. Specially noticeable was the pluck of Corporal Whiteley of the Tasmanians, who hurried to the rescue of a dismounted comrade, and through a storm of bullets brought him to a place of safety.

More of the Australians on the same day came in for a good share of work. A reconnaissance was made from Slingsfontein by

The Transvaal War

the Inniskillings and some Australians under Captain Moor. The Australians discovered the enemy in the act of preparing to shell the British camp from the south-east. They therefore took up a position on a hill some 9000 yards from camp, but here were assailed by a party of Dutchmen who endeavoured to force them to surrender. So close had the Boers approached, that their shouts calling them to give up their arms could be heard by the Colonials. For answer, however, the Australians only fixed bayonets and yelled defiance! Their position was most critical; nevertheless they held their ground with such fierce tenacity that the Burghers were cautious of approach. Meanwhile, through the maze of fiery elements and in the teeth of the enemy, a sergeant and two troopers had galloped off to inform the commanding officer of the safety of the little band, and of their intention to make a good fight of it until, under cover of the shades of night, they could effect an escape. This they eventually did. Three of their number were wounded and one was killed in the act of succouring a wounded comrade.

On the 11th of February, at Rensburg, a picket of five Victorian Rifles had a nasty experience. After pluckily holding a post for several hours, during which they were fired on by the Boers from an adjacent kopje, they were forced to retire. Three of the party were slightly wounded, and one gallant fellow, who had helped the others to mount and escape, was missing. A patrol from Jassfontein, consisting of eight Tasmanians and eight of French's Guides, also came to grief. Only two Tasmanians and three Guides returned to camp, the rest being captured by the enemy. In course of the day's work Trooper Bosch distinguished himself. On his way with two comrades to join the main body at Slingersfontein he came on a large party of Boers on a hill. Though fired on, the party made off in hot haste, when Trooper Bosch, who was ahead, came suddenly on a solitary horseman. The two riders, each believing the other to be a friend, approached, then discovering their mistake, they raised rifles. But Trooper Bosch being the quicker, promptly disarmed his antagonist and made him prisoner. With the Dutchman in charge, Bosch and his companions proceeded. Presently they came on seven Boer riders. On these the scouts opened fire, with the result that the enemy hurriedly made off, leaving behind them one wounded, who was taken prisoner. So the three scouts returned to camp very proud of their "bag."

The correspondent of the *Melbourne Herald*, accompanied by Mr. Cameron, the Australian correspondent, bearing a flag of truce, went to the Boer line west of Rensburg to make inquiries from Commandant Delarey regarding Mr. Lambie and Mr. Hales, the missing Australian correspondents. They were blindfolded before being taken to the Boer camp, where they were informed that

Changes in Cape Colony

Mr. Lambie had been killed, and were handed the portrait of his wife, which had been found in his pocket. Mr. Hales, owing to a fall from his horse, had been taken prisoner. The correspondents were informed that some 120,000 men were fighting with the Federals, which was probably a piece of Boer bravado.

It was now found necessary to retire from Coles Kop and the outposts round it, as the Boers had placed a 40-pounder off Bastard Nek, and thus commanded the vicinity. The Wiltshire Regiment



MAP ILLUSTRATING THE OPERATIONS ON THE ORANGE RIVER.

retired from Pink Hill, and the Australians and Bedfordshire Regiment moved from Windmill Hill. The Berkshire Regiment had also to move from their post—indeed, a wholesale withdrawal became imperative owing to the activity of the Boer pieces. There was now no camp west of Rensburg, and presently the camp at Slingersfontein had to withdraw on Rensburg, the eastern flank being threatened. There were Boers on all sides busily shelling the hills, and the overwhelming number of the enemy made retreat

The Transvaal War

to Rensburg inevitable. In the course of the fighting Colonel Coningham was mortally wounded.¹

On the 13th the British "strategically" evacuated Rensburg, and General Clements fell back on Arundel. The guns from Coles Kop were safely removed, and a Maxim was destroyed to save it from the clutches of the enemy.

The retirement was quite orderly. On the previous day the stores and baggage-waggons were removed. After the evacuation the Boers held a prayer-meeting, and offered up thanks for their success. They then marched off in small parties to their various outposts, chanting in nasal tones their favourite hymns.

The gallantry displayed by the members of General Clements' force during the retirement was amazing. It is found impossible to note all the acts of pluck and heroism which took place, and elicited the profound admiration of those who witnessed them, but especially noticeable was the devotion of some score of the Mounted Victorian Rifles. These were surrounded by the enemy—caught in a veritable trap—but they refused to surrender, and declared they would "die game." They fought like heroes, not one of them being left to tell the tale.

Near Dordrecht, too, which had been occupied by General Brabant, the Colonial forces were performing prodigious feats of pluck. They forced the rebels to abandon the country between Dordrecht and Penhoek. During the attack on a Boer laager on the 16th, Trooper Drysdale bravely rushed to the succour of Sergeant Weinecke under a close and heavy fire and carried him off to a place of safety. The young Colonial was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in recognition of the valorous deed. Unfortunately two gallant officers—Captain Crallah and Lieutenant Chandler—were killed.

Curiously enough, when the Boers and British became acquainted with each other they grew friendly with great rapidity. When Captain Longhurst, R.A.M.C., from Arundel, was attending wounded Australians, he remarked on the exceeding kindness of the enemy to the wounded. He also fraternised with the Boer commander, and discovered they had mutual friends in London. The "Tommies" chatted most amicably with the Boers, notwithstanding the fact that their bandoliers were filled with soft-nosed bullets. To account for their having them, the Boers said, "We must use whatever we can get." It was suggested that their

¹ Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Coningham, 2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment, was born in 1851, and joined the army in 1872. His first appointment was to the 103rd Foot, afterwards the 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers, with which he served until 1891, when he was transferred as major to the Worcestershire Regiment. Colonel Coningham was an adjutant of Militia from 1889 to 1894. He also served in the Soudan with the Frontier Field Force in 1885-86.

Changes in Cape Colony

ammunition—since they were of the northern district—had been obtained for the purpose of hunting big game at the Limpopo. This excuse the "Tommies" accepted, and one wounded in the thigh said good-humouredly, "Well, I wish you'd been kind enough to hit me lower down." Another informed a Boer that the British had specially come to deliver them out of the House of Bondage. The Boer was sceptical, whereon "Tommy" enlightened him. "Africander bondage," he explained, with a wink of the eye.

The moral effect of the relief of Kimberley soon became obvious. Barkly West was occupied by troops on the 21st of February, and there was evidence that the country west of Cape Colony and Kimberley was gradually settling down.

On the same day, General Brabant occupied Jamestown, some twenty miles north of Dordrecht, and seized quantities of horses belonging to the enemy, who in their retreat modestly had recourse to "Shank's pony."

During a reconnaissance of the Boer position at Stormberg, a party of scouts under Captain Montmorency, V.C., got within some fifty yards of the enemy, and a fierce and fatal combat ensued, which resulted in the sad loss of one of the most brilliant officers of the day.

The object of the reconnaissance was to ascertain the strength of the Boers at Stormberg. Accordingly, with four companies of Mounted Infantry drawn from the Royal Scots, the Northumberland Fusiliers, the Derbyshire Regiment, and the Royal Berkshire Regiment, with the 77th and four guns of the 74th Batteries Royal Field Artillery, the Derbyshire Regiment (Sherwood Foresters), a portion of De Montmorency's Scouts, and some Cape Police, supported by the armoured train under the charge of Lieutenant F. J. Gosset, 2nd Royal Berkshire Regiment, Sir William Gatacre occupied Molteno early on Friday morning the 23rd. Preceded by thirty Scouts, Captain de Montmorency, Lieutenant Hockley, and Colonel Hoskier, the force marched in the same direction that was to have been taken on the night of the fatal affair in December. Unfortunately the Scouts, on nearing their destination, came on a party of dismounted Boers, and these, as the British rushed up a kopje, executed the same feat on the other side of the hill. Though both instantly took cover, the scouts got the worst of it, each one as he raised a head being laid low by the fatal bullets of the completely hidden foe. Among the first to fall was Captain de Montmorency,¹ who, gallant fellow, was

¹ Captain the Hon. Raymond Harvey Lodge Joseph de Montmorency, 21st Empress of India's Lancers, and commanding De Montmorency's Scouts in South Africa, was the eldest son of Viscount Frankfort de Montmorency, K.C.B. He was born on February 5, 1867, joined the army on September 14, 1887, as second lieutenant in the Lincolnshire Regiment, and was promoted to a lieutenancy in the 21st Lancers, November 6, 1889. In this rank he served in the campaign in the Soudan in 1898, and was present at the battle of Khartoum,

The Transvaal War

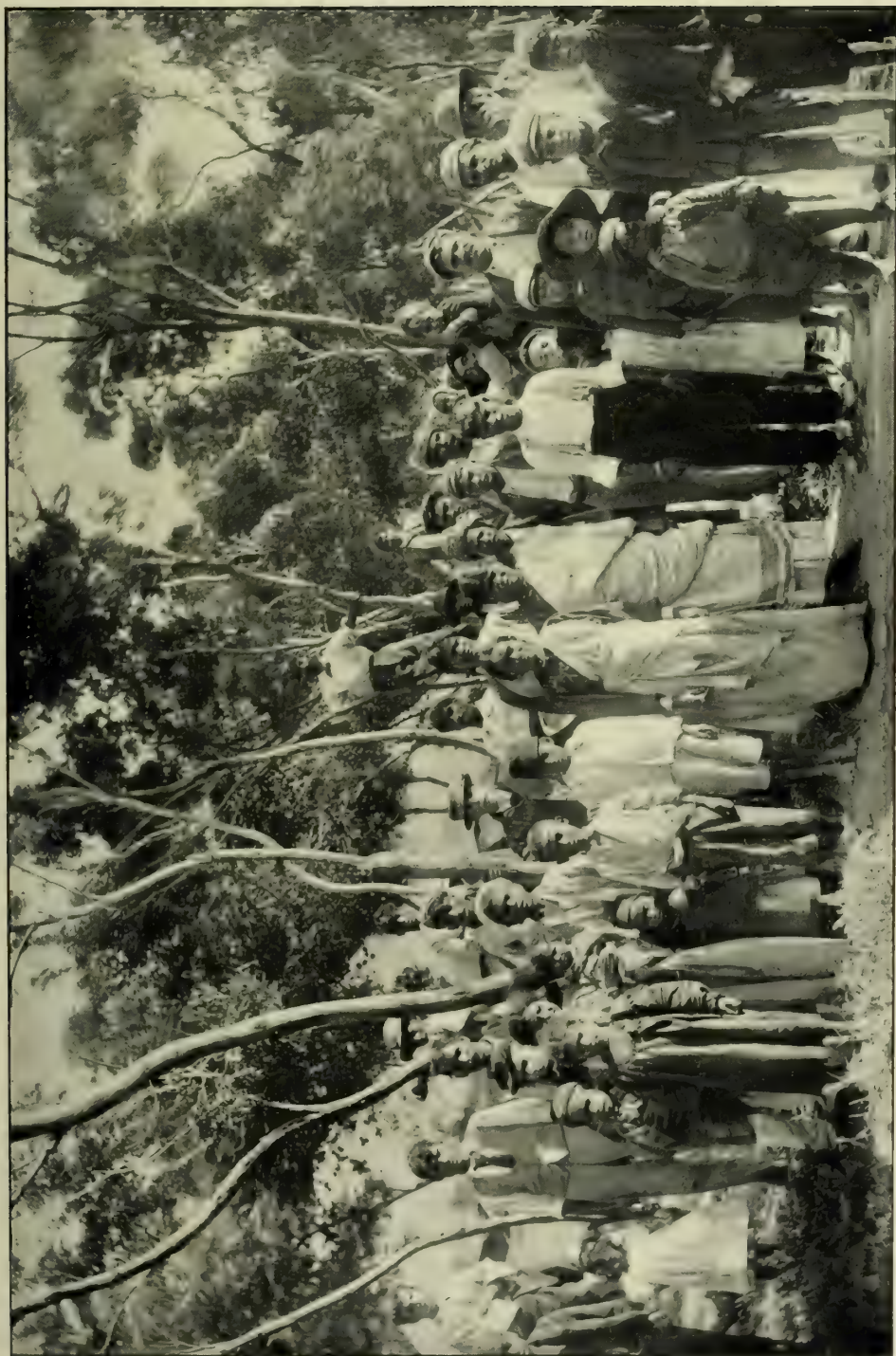
creeping round to a flank to surprise the enemy. Not long after Colonel Hoskier¹ received his second wound, a mortal one, and two comrades, Collett and Vice, adventurous and dashing Colonials, were shot through the head. Lieutenant Hockley, rendered almost blind and senseless by a wound between the eyes, was taken prisoner. A gallant attempt to rescue the Scouts was made in the midst of a tremendous storm. All were drenched to the skin. The thunder and lightning rendered artillery fire almost impossible, and very few of the daring party got away from the scene of the fight. On the kopje by Shoeman's Farm were left seven killed and five wounded.

On the following day the bodies were recovered by the military chaplains. Deeply to their regret, they discovered that the dead had been robbed, and it is asserted that a Boer was seen in the feathered hat of the heroic leader of the Scouts, while even the clothes of the others had been filched by some despicable Dutchmen. Mr. Duncombe-Jewell in the *Morning Post* gave a pathetic account of the affair:—"The chaplains to the forces, Father Ryan and Rev. R. Armitage, proceeded under a flag of truce on the following morning to recover the bodies. This they were permitted to do, but they found that the Boers had stripped and robbed the slain, one of them riding about in triumph with poor De Montmorency's hat, with its black riband ornamented with the white skull and cross-bones and the black ostrich feather at the side, hanging at his saddle-bow. So far did they carry these ravages, that on the tunic, which they hastily replaced as the chaplains approached, there remained only one button. The rest of the unfortunate men were as shamefully treated, the three buried by the Boers before the arrival of the flag of truce being interred without either clothing or ceremony of any sort."

A sad funeral took place on the Sunday following, when the remains were buried. The band played a dirge as the procession—in which was the younger officer's gallant servant and comrade, Byrne, V.C.,

and was awarded the Victoria Cross for the following service:—"At the battle of Khartoum on September 2, 1898, Lieutenant de Montmorency, after the charge of the 21st Lancers, returned to assist Second Lieutenant R. G. Grenfell, who was lying surrounded by a large body of Dervishes. Lieutenant de Montmorency drove the Dervishes off, and finding Lieutenant Grenfell dead, put the body on his horse, which then broke away. Captain Kenna and Corporal Swarbrich then came to his assistance, and enabled him to rejoin the regiment, which had begun to open a heavy fire on the enemy." Lieutenant de Montmorency, in addition to being mentioned in despatches and receiving the V.C., had also the British medal and Khedive's medal with clasp. He was promoted to captain August 2, 1899, having in the previous October been despatched on special service to South Africa, when he raised and commanded the special body of scouts whose gallant services have under him been so frequently referred to in connection with the operations in the neighbourhood of Stormberg and Dordrecht.

¹ Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant F. H. Hoskier was a well-known Volunteer officer, who had brought the force which he commanded to a high state of military efficiency. He held a certificate for proficiency in several subjects, and had obtained special mention in examinations in tactics, besides having qualified as an interpreter.



HINDOO REFUGEES FROM THE TRANSVAAL IN CAMP AT CAPE TOWN.

Photo by Alf. S. Hosking, Cape Town.

Changes in Cape Colony

of Omdurman fame, and his favourite grey Arab pony—wound its way through the town to the Molteno Cemetery. Wreaths were placed on the newly-turned earth by the General and his staff—ephemeral symbols, but in this case emblems of lasting lament for heroes sacrificed on the altar of duty.

In a Divisional Order General Gatacre recorded with deep regret the news of the death of Captain Montmorency, V.C., commanding Montmorency's Scouts, and of Lieutenant-Colonel Hoskier, 3rd Middlesex Volunteer Artillery, who were killed at Schoeman's Farm. "By their deaths," the order concluded, "the division has lost two very valuable officers."

While this affair was taking place at Molteno the West Riding Regiment was distinguishing itself at Arundel. The troops were preparing to clear some kopjes held by the enemy when some Boers suddenly advanced on them. The West Ridings stood their ground grandly, waited with fixed bayonets the arrival of the Dutch horde, and then promptly advanced and scattered them. Unfortunately Captain Wallis was shot dead. Lieutenant Wilson was wounded, but rescued in the midst of a leaden blizzard by a gallant sergeant (Frith), who rushed to his assistance and carried him off on his back to a place of shelter. Scarcely had he done so than he was wounded in the face—in the left eye and nose. Lieutenant Wilson and Sergeant Frith were placed in an ambulance, but owing to the tremendous storm which prevailed at the time, their waggon lost its bearings and wandered aimlessly throughout the night. The sufferers reached hospital on the following day. On the 26th Colesberg and Colesberg Junction were held by our troops, and on the 27th Rensburg was reoccupied.

On the 5th of March Captain M'Neill, who after the death of Captain de Montmorency was appointed to the command of Montmorency's Scouts, discovered that the Boers had evacuated Stormberg. The Scouts now pursued the enemy, determining to keep him on the run. This they did over rugged country and at great personal risk, eventually chasing the Dutchmen to and beyond Burghersdorp.

On the 7th of March General Gatacre occupied Burghersdorp, and the railway arrangements towards Stormberg and Steynsburg were being hurried on in view of the coming operations. The enthusiasm of the loyal inhabitants of the district was great and their relief intense. The greetings from one and all were most effusive, the National Anthem was sung, and the British flag hoisted with jubilation so great that many wept at the relaxation of the long strain.

General Gatacre issued a proclamation requesting rebels to surrender and give up arms, when they would receive a pass to their farms, and where they were to remain till called to account later. Some few rebels appeared to the summons, but many were still shy and were waiting, as the phrase says, "to see which way the cat jumped."

The Transvaal War

The oath administered to rebels was as follows :—

"I, a British subject, do hereby and hereon swear and declare that I was forced by the Queen's enemies to take up arms against Her Majesty's troops, and that the rifle and ammunition were issued to me by Commandant —, that I joined the commando on or about —, and left it on or about —. I now hand in my horse, rifle, and ammunition, and, if permitted, will proceed direct to my own farm, to remain there as a loyal British subject until Her Majesty's pleasure be made further known. I further promise to hold no further communication, either directly or indirectly, with Her Majesty's enemies, or to aid or abet them in any way whatever, under penalty of death."

General Clements now took up his quarters at Norval's Pont, on the south bank of Orange River. The north bank was still being strongly held by the enemy, who had succeeded in blowing up the bridge two days previously.

Aliwal North was next occupied, but the occupation was attended with severe fighting across the river. But the British took up tenable positions, while the Boers, after a wholesome experience of British fire, removed their laager from the hills. The inhabitants of the town, despite the fact that our entry was accompanied by shells, were full of enthusiasm. Colonel Page Henderson and his advance party seized the heights beyond Lundean's Nek. The enemy shelled the bridge with Krupp guns with great vigour, and twenty men were wounded. The British from their entrenched positions silenced these barkings, but were then attacked by the Boer riflemen, who were finally driven off by the Border Horse and a Maxim gun. A waggon of ammunition was captured and several Boers. There were general complaints as to the treatment experienced by British people in the place, and there was some satisfaction when Mayor Smuts was subsequently arrested on a charge of treason.

Railway and telegraphic communication were now carried to Burghersdorp. Everywhere the commencement of a new system was evident. In the north-eastern districts of the Free State the rebels, on the withdrawal of the commandos, slowly returned to their senses. Both English and Dutch loyalists were beginning to breathe freely; they had both equally suffered from Boer oppression. Europeans and natives were jubilant at the now continual laying down of arms by rebels and Boer refugees along the whole of the Colonial borders. The Boer refugees, some of whom were in a pitiable plight, many of them having subsisted for weeks mainly on bread and water and a species of coffee made from rye, were anxious for protection. They stood in fear of their lives, as Commandant Olivier had threatened to shoot those who should surrender. Major Hook of the Cape Police, with his smart men, occupied Barkly East, and at Lady Grey British rule, after three

At Bethulie

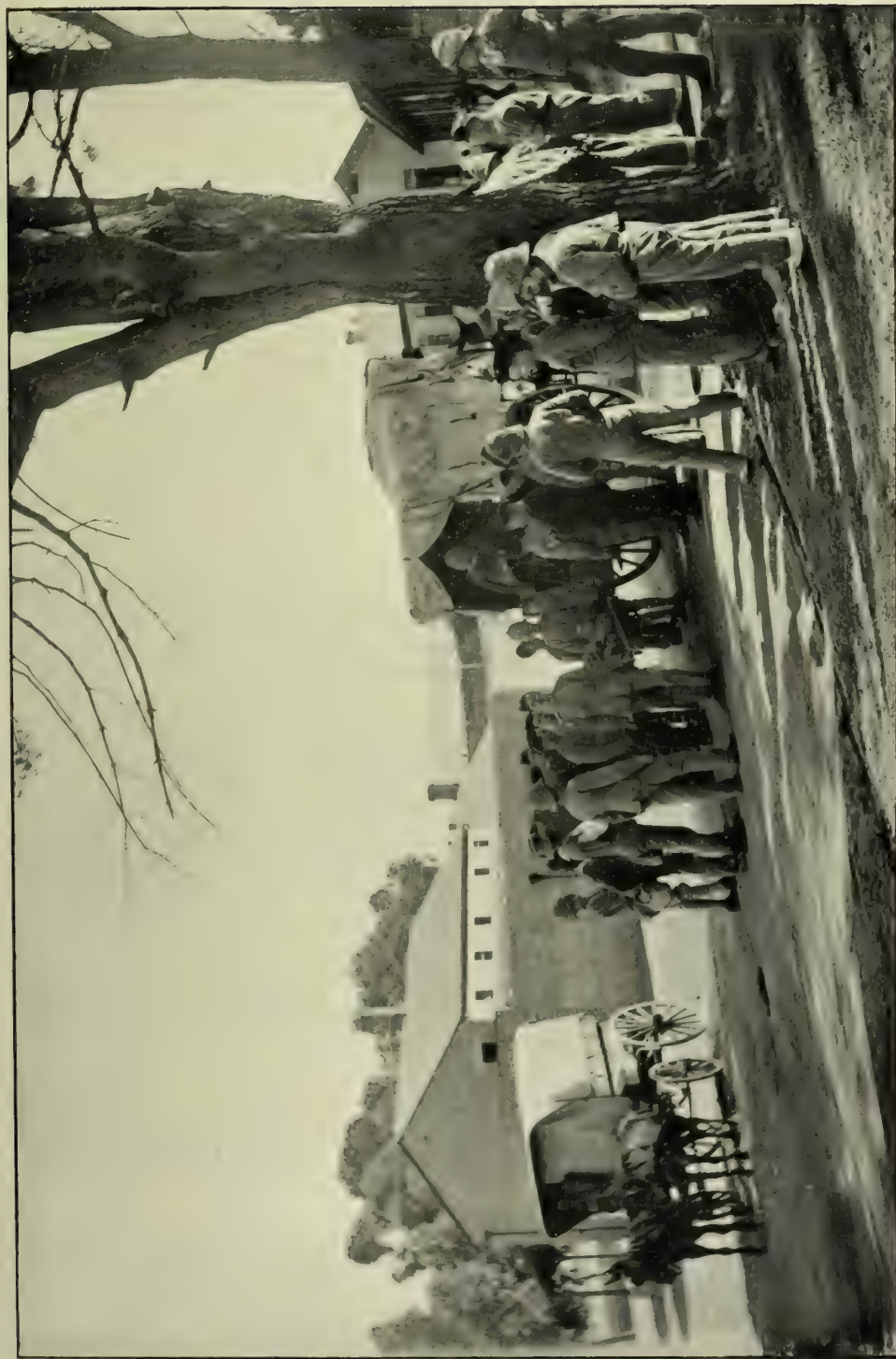
and a half months of oppression, was re-established. It is pleasing to record that the heroic postmistress returned to her post there with an increased salary. The total collapse of the rebels was impending, and there were now only animated arguments among loyalists and others as to the treatment which should be given to those who had engaged in and fostered the lamentable revolt. All voted for the speedy appointment of a Judicial Commission. Though a policy of revenge was to be deprecated, it was urged that the ringleaders should be punished with exemplary severity, as a deterrent for the future, and for the purpose of demonstrating to those who had suffered annoyances, loss, and anxiety, that there was some advantage in the maintenance of loyalty in trying circumstances.

AT BETHULIE

Sir William Gatacre, owing to the species of general post that had been set on foot by Lord Roberts' successful advance, suddenly found himself released from the shackles that had bound him. As we know, the enemy had retreated from Stormberg, and from Burghersdorp. Towards the Orange River they had betaken themselves in hot haste, and it was now time to fly after the retreating foe, to catch them, if possible, at the river. At Bethulie there was still the railway bridge. But even as it was neared it ceased to exist. Fragments filled the air. The Boers had blown it up behind them, and wrecked iron was all that displayed itself to the British troops. The road bridge, however, remained; a structure valued by the Colony at £100,000. Of course that would go directly, and the great question was whether the British troops, by putting the spur on their already jaded energies, would be able to reach the place in time to defend it. Captain M'Neill and thirty Scouts made a rush for it; and only just reached the scene of action in time! The Derby was never more hotly contested. The Scouts, like hunted fiends, had sped over obstacle and acre to gain the goal before the fell work of the Boers could begin. They won by a neck. The Boers were already buzzing along the bridge, manipulating with wire and explosive, putting the finishing touches on their design! At sight of the British there was a stampede to north of the river. Here the enemy had supports. (The Scouts carefully hid the fact they had none.) Here the enemy ensconced himself and prepared to do his worst. The Scouts took up their position in the kraal of a farm from which they could sweep the northern approach to the already laid mines, and sent back word urgently praying for reinforcements. Others took their well-deserved rest. Meanwhile with ferocious tenacity some eleven of them held on to the bridge, hawk-eyed, watching, firing, hiding, dodging,

The Transvaal War

anything that should gain time till the reinforcements could appear. On the other side, only a question of yards off was the foe—numberless, it seemed to them, sniping, potting, and banging with every missile at their command, and determining to hang round the precious bone of contention, the valuable road bridge. The British maintained the same determination. Perhaps a touch, an unseen movement, would set the whole string of dynamite mines in motion; perhaps in this moment or the next, with a roar and a rumble, the clear atmosphere would be flecked to blindness with little bits—bits of the bridge that stood before them—bits, too, of the men that were! Still they hung on. It was a grievous subject for contemplation, a sorry possibility to roll in the wrappings of meditation. But fear they scorned. The Boers in vast numbers thronged on the opposite side, bullets from Mausers and Martini-Henrys spurted and flicked up their little wisps of dust till sand became thick as a veil between Boer and Briton. But still the hardy Scouts clung to their post. Moments, every one long as days, sped on; hours passed, night waned, day broke. Still the tiny British band of braves behind bush and boulder stayed with rifles cocked and pointed at the bridge. They dared not approach, but they defied the enemy to venture. Then, with morn, the eternity of anxiety was ended—they were reinforced by the Cape Police! Later the artillery came up. Oh, the sigh of relief! The bridge was saved! Oh, the rejoicing to hear the grand bark of British guns, and see the great earth mushrooms opening up to the sky on the opposite side! Then, at eventide came the supreme deed, among deeds no less worthy. Shot and shell were now falling on all sides of the mined bridge. The Boers were firmly ensconced across the front; hidden and sniping, and now and then appearing and firing boldly. The gloaming was otherwise peaceful, the purple shades of evening blending with the gentle, rippling golden grey of the river. Then from his fellows advanced one Lieutenant Popham of the Derbyshire Regiment. Straight to the threatened bridge, already peppered with the storms of the enemy, he went, crossed to the other side, and quick as thought deftly cut the connecting wires for firing the mines! By a miracle no Boers observed the act, an act that rendered abortive all their ingenious efforts and made the British masters of the situation. Then followed more plucky feats. Young Popham, on advancing through the trenches, had come across large, suspicious-looking boxes. He returned to the British lines. He gathered together some of the goodly men of his regiment, and with them again made his way to the threatened bridge. The sight of the party was the signal for a volley from the Dutchmen, but still they pursued their way to the boxes. "Dynamite, by Jove!" said one; "Kingdom come!" said another. But up they took them,



CONVEYING WOUNDED TO WYNBERG HOSPITAL CAMP.

Photo by Alf. S. Hosking, Cape Town.

At Bethulie

and there and then, under a storm of bullets that now meant more even than death, the splendid fellows marched back again. The astonishing feat cast dismay over the Federals on the other side of the water, as it filled with admiration and pride all in the British camp who were privileged to view a sight seldom seen in a lifetime. And then, later on, as though the quality of heroism were inexhaustible as the widow's cruse of oil, another splendid act followed on the heels of the foregoing ones. In the dead of night Captain Grant of the Royal Engineers groped his way to the bridge. The Boers were on the alert, but he groped cautiously. The soldier's martial step gave way to the catlike burglarious tread! It was ticklish work that had to be done—work that needed time and nicety of touch. But he meant to do it, and one hint, one rumour of activity would have roused the whole Dutch horde and ruined his plan. The bridge, as we know, was mined. Lieutenant Popham had cut the wires. But the charges of dynamite were somewhere. These Captain Grant found, removed, and dexterously dropped, buried for ever in the purling river! Then with infinite care he detached the other connecting wires, and the bridge was safe! This was the beginning of the end. A few more passages at arms, and then the British on the 15th of March crossed the Orange River.

Yet another brilliant act was performed soon after the arrival of the troops at Bethulie. Captain Hannessy of the Cape Police, an officer on General Gatacre's staff, was detailed to capture the railway station, which was situated some distance from the town. This he did. He examined the telegraph room, found the instrument intact, and learnt by communication with Springfontein that there were Boers still in that direction. Without hesitation he at once set off, in company with another adventurous spirit (Captain Turner of the Scouts), on his way to Springfontein. They commandeered a trolley and moved up the line. On nearing the station they saw two trains with steam up, ready for departure. Within the building were Boers—not slim Boers this time—but snoring ones, with bandoliers awry and rifles lollopping. It was a moment to be grasped. The rifles and the bandoliers were gently removed. Then the sleepers were awakened. They rubbed their eyes, and found, not rifles or bandoliers, but that they were prisoners of war! They were without arms, resistance was useless. They were escorted to the railway trucks; an engine-driver was found, and presently the two officers with their "bag" (two trains and eight prisoners) returned in triumph to Bethulie. Here their big-game hunting was vastly appreciated, as at this time, their engines having been left on the other side of the river, the capture of rolling stock was of tremendous importance. Soon after this, troops from Bloemfontein were sent off to occupy Springfontein.

CHAPTER VII

BLOEMFONTEIN UNDER BRITISH RULE

THE pastoral little town of brick and tin in the vast expanse of toasted grass had now become a centre of civilisation, one may almost say a fashionable rendezvous. There regiments multitudinous were congregated, and these helped to convert the sleepy, dozing capital into a miniature sphere of many dialects born of a common tongue. Human beings, the conquered and the conquerors, brushed shoulders in friendliness, bought and sold, listened to the bands playing the well-worn British airs in the market-place, and discoursed, under the ægis of the Union Jack, which fluttered from pinnacle and spire, of trade and prospects as though such things as big guns had never acted in place of handshakes, and such men as Steyn had never staked their all on the possibilities of a mirage.

That potentate had betaken himself to Kroonstad, which, in new conditions, had also assumed a new aspect. It was now the capital of the Free Staters, and the seat of the polyglot army that was gathered together to consider the new face of affairs. A Norwegian attaché, who was with the strange horde, gave a description of the quaint dust-bound town and its still quainter inhabitants:—

“KROONSTAD, *March 16.*

“Here prevails the most extraordinary life it has ever been my lot to witness. All hotels and private houses are filled to overflowing, whilst little laagers are spread everywhere in and outside the town. A wild stream of loose horses, mules, donkeys, and oxen, and little bodies of troops and solitary riders pour through the streets, broken by heavy ox-waggon and mule-carts driven by whips and shouts. All nationalities and all colours are present, and the most Babylonian babble of tongues resounds on all sides. Here are foreign military attachés, surgeons, nurses, regular and irregular Boer troops, volunteers of all arms, officers as well as privates, and besides a goodly lot which I can only stamp as ‘freebooters,’ for they do not belong to any fixed commando, but look upon the fighting as sport or chase. Frequently, however, among them I come across men of high culture and of first-class families, often fine handsome men with martial bearing, side by side with the worst scum of the earth. Many pass from one war to another. I have spoken with some who have gone through the Greek, Cuban, and Philippine wars. And what uniforms do these mercenaries wear? None at all, or, more correctly speaking, each one has invented his own! The only common badge is the bandolier across the shoulder and the slouch hat. Otherwise every one

Bloemfontein under British Rule

wears whatever clothes he may possess, only so that it is nothing new. Many of them who are well off have donned a fantastic costume—slouch hat, with waving ostrich feathers and gold lace, jacket edged with yellow, orange, and green bands, epaulettes with great gold tassels, white or gilt buttons, stripes on the trousers, top-boots with spurs, cockades in the hat and on the breast, and revolvers in the belt. At present the Boer troops are spread all over the place, mostly without any order or discipline. Most of them, particularly the Orange Boers, are sick of the war, and long to go home to their families and farms. Others have simply gone home after the Bloemfontein *débâcle*. In these circumstances Steyn considered it best to allow his men to go home for a few days, and call them together again when the great council of war at the end of the week had decided whether the war should be continued. Many thousands have thus gone home, with or without leave. Will they return? It seems a dangerous experiment."

The fact was that gradually, very gradually, the eyes of the Boers were being opened, though they still tried to persuade themselves that Lord Roberts' presence in the capital of the Free State had no decisive effect on the game of war. They began to look anxiously towards the Continental Powers, who, they had been led to believe, were in sympathy with them, and to wonder when some intervention would save them from the doom they had brought on themselves. In one respect they were beginning to see clearly and to understand, that the great ideal of sweeping the British into the sea was a chimera, and that they must limit their aim to retaining their own freedom, the sole one that could be indulged in and clung to with any shadow of success.

The Dutchmen still hoped against hope for victory, but their scorn for the British was fast dying a natural death. Our repeated fights, had they served no other purpose, succeeded in educating those who had dared to flout us, and after the capture of Cronje the effect of the somewhat brusque lesson was very conspicuous. Before the battle of Elandslaagte, a resident of Cape Town indulged in argument with an obstinate Boer in terms somewhat similar to these :—

"We are going to send 50,000 or 60,000 troops into the field."

"They will be all shot!" he bragged.

"We shall send another 50,000 or 60,000."

"They, too, will all be shot!" he repeated.

"We shall send more."

"Almighty! am I to keep on shooting the Englishman all my life!" sighed the Dutchman, with his best air of braggadocio.

Such bumptiousness was not confined to himself. All his compatriots started on the campaign with identical bombast, for they took their cue from the attitude of those Continental nations with which they had lately become associated. Our neighbours across the Channel had found it convenient to persuade themselves we

The Transvaal War

were a decadent race, that the Old Country was played out and her children effete. As with the empires of Xerxes, Alexander, Augustus, so with that of Victoria, they said to themselves; and since the wish is father to the thought, the idea was rapidly propagated that Great Britain was fast becoming a second-rate Power.

Almost the whole of Europe had indulged in objectionable comment on the subject of the campaign, and treated us to naked truths that, though unpalatable, were useful as an excellent opportunity to see ourselves as others see us, and correct a somewhat overweening passion for resting on British-grown laurels. But however good as a tonic the cosmopolitan criticism may have been, it was distinctly ill-timed and decidedly ungrateful. Our sneering foes should have patted us on the back, have applauded us. They might even have subscribed to help us to do the hard work of Europe, for, as the Norwegian showed, we were not fighting the Boer alone, but were attacking thousands of his mercenaries—the scum of Europe. We were scouring a veritable Augean stable. Ne'er-do-weels of every nationality were congregated under the Transvaal flag—vagabonds, for the most part, who had made their own country too hot to hold them, and who hoped by promoting a general upheaval to come down on their feet safely—somehow, somewhere!

Fortunately Lord Roberts' masterly combinations had rapidly brought about a general disillusionment, and served to prove to our critical neighbours that our martial race—from officers to the most raw and fledgling "Tommies"—was the same race as of yore, "game for anything," even when the thing might range between and include shot and shell, sickness and starvation! The object-lesson was a grand one, and could not pass unrecognised. For us the sad part of it was that the flower of our country, the valiant sons of brave men and the noble descendants of kings, should have had to risk their lives against such a mob of adventurers and filibusters, creatures who were actuated by none of the finer and natural impulses of the Boers to secure their independence, but flung themselves into the fight merely because the spirit of ruffianism which had driven them from their native soils was too rampant to be appeased by any other exercise. But there is no achievement without sadness—no success without pain. Lives must ever be sacrificed to maintain any great nation's prestige, and now how much more noble seemed the sacrifice when it secured the prestige of a Power that had propagated equality and civilisation over the whole face of the world!

The British once having put their hand to the plough, had stuck manfully to their work, not in hope of reward, but in the belief in the ministry of their great race. Beyond the minor considerations of franchise and political advantage, there had been greater and higher



THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF BLOEMFONTEIN—AN EVENING CONCERT IN MARKET SQUARE BY THE
PIPERS OF THE HIGHLAND BRIGADE.

Drawing by A. Forestier.

Bloemfontein under British Rule

ends to be attained, and as the flag was fluttering over the capital of the Free State these great ends served to inspire and refresh those who almost fainted by the way. Where the British flag waved there was freedom, enlightenment, progress, evolution—there was emancipation from sin, injustice, and degradation; therefore at the cost of precious lives, and for no personal gain, the great end for which they toiled and suffered and died had to be achieved.

Every ideal, whether merely human or bordering on the divine, demands enormous sacrifices from those who desire to realise it, and the spread of civilisation calls for its ministers and martyrs, and will continue to call for them so long as there are men of heroic mould who, regardless of personal cost, are ready to prize and protect a great and national cause. Only this reflection could serve to hearten and brace our warriors at the front, for, at this time, Lord Roberts' glorious position was far from a happy one. It was impossible to ignore the cost at which the prestige of his country and his splendid success was being secured. He found himself at Bloemfontein with the wreck of an army on his hands, with men dropping thick as flies from disease resulting from the terrible exhaustion of the march and from the insanitary conditions of the camp at Paardeberg. There the only water available for drinking purposes had flowed down from the Boer camp a mile and a half up the river, and was polluted by rotting carcasses in various stages of decomposition, and, as a natural consequence of these conditions, Bloemfontein was suddenly filled with an appalling number of sick, some 2000 patients suffering from typhoid and enteric, in addition to a very considerable number of wounded at the fight at Driefontein. How to help the abnormal number of sufferers was a problem that taxed the medical authorities to the utmost, for it was impossible to meet the huge demand under the existing conditions. To improvise mere accommodation for so large an influx of sick within the narrow confines of Bloemfontein was a hard task in itself, and even the field-hospitals were inadequate, for owing to the rapidity of the march from the Modder no tents were carried with the force, and none were available until railway communication with Cape Colony could be restored. The Commander-in-Chief of this immense army in this dilemma had but a single narrow-gauge line of railway between himself and his base some 700 miles distant, and this line of rails was not yet available. The first duty was to utilise it for the bringing up of supplies sufficient to sustain the bare life of the healthy force, and prevent those who were sound from joining those who were already exhausted. Tents for the sick, nurses, doctors, hospitals were ordered up, but these could only arrive in their turn, and meanwhile the patients were distributed in all the public buildings, schools, &c. The town being small, this accommodation was meagre in the extreme,

The Transvaal War

and quantities of the sick in the field hospitals had to place their blankets and waterproof sheets on the ground, and lie there huddled together in a condition that was grievous in the extreme. The mortality was tremendous, and the sufferings of those who were recovering were pitiable, but these things it was impossible to avert; they have belonged in all ages to the horror of war, and in other times were the natural and ordinary, and not, as in the present case, an abnormal consequence of an exceptional situation.

The relief of Ladysmith and Kimberley accomplished, Lord Roberts was able to adhere to the cherished Napoleonic maxim—an army should have but one line of operation, which should be carefully preserved, and abandoned only as the result of weightier considerations. This army was now being reorganised as one great whole, a task which involved gigantic labour and called for rare discrimination. But the marvellous tact, one might say magnetism, of Lord Roberts smoothed every difficulty, and the enthusiasm with which those who were brought into contact with the Commander-in-Chief alluded to him, was remarkable. An army chaplain, writing home, voiced the popular feelings for the one and only “Bobs”:—“We are serving under the best and noblest man who ever led an army. You can have no conception of the passionate and devoted affection which Lord Roberts inspires in all ranks. It is not artifice, or adroitness, or dramatic power, but a simple overflowing of the milk of human kindness. Every one notices it; all remark it. The roughest and most cynical of the brave men out here cannot escape the fascination of his delightfully quiet and natural manner, his transparent unselfishness; and one sees in him the value in a born leader of men of a clear and musical voice, and eyes bright and piercing, yet full of kindness and benevolent sympathy. He is entirely without affectation, and takes care that the troops are fed, and not stinted of recreation whenever it can be found. Nothing pleases him more than to mix with the men when at play. And he is an example to all in his regular attendance at public worship and in resting on the Lord’s Day. His staff take their ‘tone’ from him, and this is good for all who come into contact with that staff. I never met so active a man. At daybreak he is in the saddle, riding round the camp before he makes an informal inspection, without notice, of some portion of the lines. He shows no sign of failing strength or of impaired energy, and fatigue is a word not to be found in his vocabulary. I am told that the secret is frugal living and early to rest which keeps him in such excellent health. It is a privilege which all value very highly that they have had the good fortune to serve under our Field-Marshal.”

No such raptures were expended on the silent man of Egyptian

Bloemfontein under British Rule

fame who had made himself into the machinery of the tremendous movement, but how much his wonderful work was appreciated the following extract from the *Times* serves to show:—"When Lord Roberts and his Chief of the Staff reached Cape Town, we had troops of all arms in South Africa, but we had no field-army, and until we had a field-army the enemy were to a great extent masters of the position. It is not easy to realise the abilities and the unwearying energy needed to convert all the scattered raw material we possessed in South Africa and the reinforcements daily arriving from all parts of the Empire into the coherent and mobile fighting machine now directed by the Commander-in-Chief. To Lord Kitchener under him belongs the credit of that remarkable achievement. He has not only marshalled the fragmentary units of the paper army corps into a workmanlike fighting force, but in a country without roads in a European sense, and with few and light railways, he has seen that they were fed and clothed and supplied with all the innumerable articles indispensable to their efficiency. If Lord Roberts has won the battles, Lord Kitchener has been the 'organiser of victory.'"

The result of the combined methods of these two great soldiers was little short of marvellous, and when we look back to the days of Wellington, and compare the army of his day with the army at Bloemfontein, we can but wonder and admire and congratulate ourselves.

For instance, the army at Bloemfontein, the victorious army, which had suffered exceedingly from the many annoyances of the Boers, comported themselves in their day of triumph with admirable reserve. Brave as the British warriors of old, they showed themselves men of finer stamp and higher discipline than the men who followed Wellington. We have the words of that great commander, to assure us that his force was almost incorrigible. He declared that his own troops at the beginning of the Peninsular war were "a rabble, who cannot bear success any more than Sir John Moore's army could bear failure." He also confessed, "I am endeavouring to tame them, but if I should not succeed, I must make an official complaint of them, and send one or two corps home in disgrace. They plunder in all directions."

Things in Bloemfontein were very different. The victorious army under Lord Roberts walked in like the heroes they were, stopped their predatory instincts at a word, and paid their way and conducted themselves like gentlemen. Indeed the Free Staters lined their pockets almost too satisfactorily at the expense of their conquerors!

Meanwhile the enemy conspired and plotted. On the 17th of March, at Kroonstad, a great council of war was held by the two Presidents, which was attended by a strange and mongrel

The Transvaal War

community. Among the motley crew were some forty Boer leaders, De Wet, De Larey, Botha, and De Villebois-Mareuil (who was killed at Boshop later on). They were not goodly to look on, as uniform was non-existent, and clean shirts were luxuries that long since had been dispensed with. The action of the Boers, their strength and weakness, came under discussion, and all decided that they must fight to the bitter end. President Kruger offered up prayer, and petitioned the Almighty to give ear to the just claims of his people, while President Steyn, when his turn came, stuck to practical matters, discussed the situation, and declared that if the English thought that because they had captured the Free State capital they had won the battle they were self-deluded. He went on to say: "How should we now continue the war? Should we, as before, defend ourselves in fortified positions, or should we try a new method? I am no soldier," he continued, "but, according to my conviction, we ought no longer to occupy fortified positions, as the English have learned to manœuvre us out of them without fighting, for which they invariably have plenty of men. Therefore, we ought only, as much as possible, to hamper the enemy's forward march, and, whilst threatening his rear and flank, attack him everywhere where there is a chance with small commandos without train. We must by this method proceed more offensively than hitherto, and before all turn upon his lines of communication."

The President's scheme was much applauded and approved, after which De Larey began to complain of the state of the Boer army, the size and irregularity of the commandos, and the huge waggon laagers behind their positions, stating that owing to these being threatened by a manœuvre of the British, the men were forced hurriedly to leave the ranks to look after the safety of the waggons. He attributed the Boers' flight at Poplar Grove entirely to anxiety regarding these waggons. He suggested in future fighting with small commandos without train, as he declared it impossible for the Boers to succeed in wielding big armies, because when the enemy attempted to surround or outflank them the Boers lost their heads.

General Joubert proposed "that the so-called 'veldcornetschappen,' which are too large bodies to be led by one man, should be reduced to sections of twenty-five, with a corporal at the head. In the Transvaal this had already been initiated with very satisfactory results." This proposal was also adopted, with the proviso that "'veldcornets' who did not at once adopt it should be fined £10." The position of such a corporal is similar to that of a sergeant in Europe.

Discussion later turned to the coalfields in Dundee, and to prevent them becoming of use to the British it was decided that they must be destroyed. General Botha, however, objected to this destruction, on the principle that the fields were not contraband of war, but

Bloemfontein under British Rule

private property. Thereupon President Steyn argued: "I am not of a destructive disposition, but this is necessary, and in accord with the law of nations. Does any one think that the English would let a vessel with coal for the Transvaal go by? If I had to blow up half the Orange Free State in order to secure the independence of my people I would do so." The great council then closed with the following appeal by President Steyn:—"I close the council in the hope that every officer realises the seriousness of the situation. It is a question of life or death to us, whether we shall remain an independent nation or become slaves. I do all that is in my power, and so does also my elder brother (Kruger). I am no soldier, but you officers are, and to you much is entrusted—the future of our country. Your reward will depend on your actions. Your task is a very difficult one. May God aid you! We are all mortal, but is there a more glorious death than to fall for your country and people at the head of your fellow-Burghers. May God help us! The position is indeed full of trouble, but when night is darkest dawn is nearest."

These impassioned periods were highly effective, and the Burghers who were present forgot to ask themselves why the speaker had carefully insured himself against so glorious an exit from life by carefully taking to his heels whenever he was confronted by the British!

Some Burghers evidently thinking that an ounce of example was worth a ton of precept, decided not to die gloriously, but to live at peace with all men inside their homes, and consequently turned their backs on their party and returned to their farms.

A proclamation had been issued requiring Burghers residing within ten miles of the military headquarters and the town to deliver up all arms and ammunition by noon on the 18th, under penalty of being punished and having their goods confiscated, and by degrees, as a consequence of the proclamation, rifles in considerable quantities were handed in. On the other hand, a great many more modern weapons were surreptitiously disposed of, many of them being buried in order to be dug up as occasion might require, and obsolete firearms surrendered in their place.

The work of pacification was going on apace at Springfontein, where the 1st Scots Guards, the 3rd Grenadier Guards, four Royal Artillery guns, and forty Mounted Infantry were now stationed, and at Bethulie, which place also had decided not to show fight.

Sir Godfrey Lagden from Maseru now telegraphed to Lord Roberts stating that the residents of Wepener (a town at the extreme east of the Free State on the Basutoland border) wished to receive copies of the proclamation and had decided to lay down their arms, and it was stated that many more towns on the eastern fringe desired to follow suit.

The Transvaal War

With marvellous celerity things began to shape themselves. The law courts resumed work. Mr. Papenfus, whose services as Llandrost had been dispensed with, was replaced by Mr. Collins. A train service was speedily established between Bloemfontein and Cape Town, and the Bank of Africa and the National Bank of the Free State were permitted (subject to restriction) to continue busi-



SIGNAL STATION AT BLOEMFONTEIN.

On the left of the picture is the heliograph, and on the right a Begbie signal lamp, for use when there is no sun. (Photo by Reinhold Thiele.)

ness. Transactions with towns in the Transvaal and Free State still occupied by the enemy were not allowed.

Naturally some of the best type of farmers in the vicinity who had surrendered were anxious for protection against attacks by Boers still in the field, and Lord Roberts, bearing this in mind, sent out columns to register names and take over arms, and give assurance that the necessary protection was forthcoming. During the

Bloemfontein under British Rule

end of March, General French, on this mission intent, was sent to Thabanchu (forty miles east of Bloemfontein), while a detachment from General Gatacre's headquarters had gone to Smithfield (some forty miles north of Aliwal North). General Clements operated in the same pacific way round the south-west skirts of Bloemfontein, while General Brabant "tackled" the only still aggressive force of the Boers in the southern part of the Free State. Commandant Olivier with a force of some 5000 men and sixteen guns was there, being pushed back inch by inch, it was hoped into the arms of General French, who was waiting with such horses as he could still muster at Thabanchu to pounce on him. Still, though slowly, the country was settling down, and the inhabitants were beginning to realise the advantage of bringing in supplies for sale. They, however, were "slim" at the core, and their slimness was responsible for some lamentable occurrences with which we shall have to deal anon.

The telegraph was now restored as far as Reddersberg Railway, communication had been restored with Bethulie, and the railway at Norval's Pont had been completed. In south and west peace reigned. There were even signs that the Transvaalers were thinking of abandoning the defence of the Free State. Friction between the Federals was reported on all sides. Even Mr. Steyn and Mr. Kruger were scarcely at one. Mr. Steyn's last remark to the grand old man of Pretoria when they parted at Bloemfontein was, "Mind the British don't catch you, or you will get better quarters in St. Helena than I." Both Presidents were aware that the Commander-in-Chief was a person to be reckoned with, and that, if they wished to make a last wild effort, they must put their shoulder to the wheel. So on the 21st of March President Steyn and General Joubert went on a tour of inspection for the purpose of encouraging the troops. With them was a foreigner who described their movements. "The troops who are in laager at Venterburg, Roodstation, Zand River Bridge, and Smaldeel (Winburgroodstation), number only some 700 men, with a battery and six machine guns, all Transvaal Boers. The feeling was everywhere buoyant, and all were determined to hold out. To-day the Orange Boers begin to return after their leave. It looks as if they are recovering their breath after the Bloemfontein *débâcle*, and if the English wait much before they advance, the men will have time to reorganise themselves. Colonel De Villebois-Mareuil is now occupied with the scheme of organising a flying column of foreigners, to be called the 'European Corps,' of 600 men, two guns, and a waggon with dynamite and tools, with which he intends to operate on the English lines of communication, if possible in conjunction with Major Stenekamp, who has collected some 2000 men to the west,

The Transvaal War

who are furnished with ammunition, stores, and money by General du Toit at Fourteen Streams. The English have indeed lost much valuable time; the next few weeks should show if the Boers have understood to take advantage of it. But there seems to be too little plan and too little organisation among them."

The loss of time was deplored on all hands, but Lord Roberts, rather than do things imperfectly, was content to wait. There was no use in attempting to hammer at the demoralised Boers till, rail, horses, and constitutions being in working order, his tools should be equal to the task required of them.

But the Chief, though stationary, was not allowing the grass to grow under his feet. It must be remembered that prior to his entry into Bloemfontein he had been marching and fighting for a month away from the railway, and that his primary duties had been, first, to capture and secure the railroad; second, to repair it and get it, together with bridges, &c., in working order; and thirdly, to shift his base from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth, a distance of 750 miles, by a single line of rails with a rise of 4500 feet. Much time had also been spent in defeating detached forces of the enemy which threatened his communications with Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, and blocked them from East London.

The question of horses, too, was a most important one, one which could not be settled without much delay, because, do what it might, the Government could scarcely send them off with sufficient haste to meet the demand. During the first four months of the new year there had been shipped, as remounts, in addition to those sent with the troops, 27,041 horses and 17,143 mules. A further supply was expected in May, consisting of 7500 horses and 4500 mules, and after that date another batch of 7500 horses and 20,000 mules was to be forwarded. The total of remounts bought since the opening of 1900 was about 42,000 horses and 23,000 mules! But, until the steady flow of these into the country commenced, the great final move could not be more than planned out.

The art of battle had resolved itself into a question of pace. The Boers had taught us that to be successful we must be slim, swift, and sudden. Lord Roberts decided that there must be no breathing-time, that their cunning commandos must not be permitted to collect, and that mounted troops must be met by mounted troops. It began to be evident that the army of the future would need to gallop—machine guns with the Horse Artillery, Royal Engineers with the cavalry, while guns of position and traction-engines would have to follow a corresponding process of activity! With flying cavalry and mounted infantry must also go flying engineers, ready to take their share in schemes of scientific demolition, effective destruction of lines and culverts and bridges,

Bloemfontein under British Rule

which cannot be remedied under the loss of days—days which will mean the success or the failure of the enterprise in hand. In fact, hereafter a vast and wonderful military dictionary will be comprised in the word “mobility.”

To the ordinary mind the question of mobility resolves itself into a mere matter of mounted men. It is almost impossible to follow the extraordinary ramifications strategically and tactically connected with the term. To increase the mobility of the army—the problem which had to be faced by Lord Roberts on his arrival at the Cape and again at Bloemfontein—it was, above all things, imperative to have quicker moving transport; strategically, a leader would be hand-tied without it. After this it was necessary to provide for perpetual relays of mounts for the cavalry with far less weight on the saddle, and to feed up the infantry, and thus restore to the men their mental and muscular elasticity. Tactical mobility was dependent on these considerations, and they had to be faced equally with the great difficulty of how to deal with the daily increasing number of sick. The Boers had been given too much breathing-time at first, and the delay had to be made up for by the hurried and costly swoop on Cronje, which turned the tide of British fortune. It was now important that another rush should be made—a rush without the “intervals for refreshments” which had served the Boers so conveniently, and enabled their recuperative courage to assert itself—and to organise this a somewhat long halt was obligatory.

The Chief now intended to make the capital the advanced base for the invasion of the Transvaal, and decided to attempt no further move till sixty days' supplies should have arrived from the Cape. The heterogeneous units of Imperial and Colonial troops now called for redistribution. Gaps had to be filled in and “inefficients” weeded out. General Warren was put into civil charge of Griqualand West; General Nicholson was given charge of the transport—a thankless and onerous post; General Chermiside took over the Third Division from General Gatacre; General Hunter was drawn with Barton's Brigade from Natal to the Free State side; Generals Pole-Carew and Rundle got Divisions; and General Ian Hamilton was appointed to the command of a Division of Mounted Infantry, 11,000 men in all, composed of two Brigades, each of four corps, with batteries of artillery attached. The remounting of the cavalry and Mounted Infantry was an undertaking needing time and help from all parts of the British world. Activities were not all serious, however.

Bloemfontein boasted a newspaper. It was styled the *Friend of the Free State*. Before many days were over it had changed hands, and had become the perquisite of the war correspondents. It was now run on Imperial lines, and formed the organ of official com-

The Transvaal War

munications during the military occupation of the capital. But for that reason it did not lose the sense of humour with which the free-lances of the press—Rudyard Kipling among them—were bubbling. A specimen of the jocosity of our exuberant scribes serves as a memento of a wonderful period.

“STINKOSSMULEFONTEIN”

THE DESCRIPTIVE ART

We have often felt that the gallant members of Lord Roberts' force, although themselves daily engaged in doing deeds which will live in history, yet have to exercise a vast amount of patience before they can read for themselves the brilliant, graphic, and wonderful accounts of their doings sent home by the war correspondents attached to the force. England is three weeks away, and it is a long time for the gallant soldier to wait to see his name in all the glory of leaded type. With the usual enterprise of the *Friend*, we have—we will not say how—managed to see and copy the telegrams sent home by the leading correspondents describing the action at Stinkossmulefontein Kopje. It was not, it is true, a very big engagement, for two companies of Mounted Infantry were sent to see if there were any Boers in the said kopje. They found them there—in the usual manner—one man wounded and six horses—and then retired to report the fact. That is the bare solid truth of the whole thing; now for the correspondents' accounts:—

Times (London):—Human element in what commonly supposed be machine, namely, two companies Mounted Infantry to-day severely tried. To put to-day's action form algebraic equation situation briefly this Boers keen-eyed, rugged held kopje (forget name kopje but know stink and fontein in it but see Reuter) sitting behind boulders, while other portion equation represented two companies Mounted Infantry (don't know commander or regiment see Reuter) is possible work whole thing algebraically Boer on kopje equal ten Mounted Infantry advancing along level plain therefore fifty boers on kopje more than match for two hundred Mounted Infantry advancing across plain whole thing followed mathematical sequence Mounted Infantry returned from kopje having tried solve impossible equation.

Daily Telegraph (London):—Early morning while camp asleep rose prepared my coffee saddled horse left camp each side lay poor wearied soldiers fast asleep dreaming doubtless home mothers wives sweethearts some tossed uneasily hard veldt moon shone pouring paling with silver light features [please insert here one my night-before-battle scenes No. 4] but I could not help feeling Army doing wrong sleep knew enemy front determined myself go forward find out position enemy passed outlying picket told officer keep good look out as knew enemy front officer answer and actually wished prevent me passing picket but when told him my name allowed pass sun now rising glorious [insert sunrise scene No. 2] moved cautiously forward saw near distance kopje approached near suddenly whole kopje burst forth into flame of flashes bullets whizzed past but I remained still counting carefully each flash till I found out exactly number Boers then putting spurs galloped back full speed flying past picket sentries horse lines arrived myself and horse breathless Field Marshal's cart dismounted saluted told him I had discovered fifty enemy in position four miles on. Field marshal drinking coffee said thank you continued eating

Bloemfontein under British Rule

breakfast I then developed to him my plan campaign drew statement correct map. Field marshal continued breakfast again said thank you I left him field marshal following my plan ordered two companies Mounted Infantry reconnoitre position which did with loss one man six horses wounded [insert famous "Vulture Scene"].

Daily News (London):—Again British arms successfully came contact enemy locating position number with great exactness early morning two companies mounted infantry under Major Jones pushed just as sun tinging kopjes with ruby light saw kopje front which from indications appeared be held enemy opening into skirmishing order small force advanced till within rifle range when enemy opened heavy fire Major Jones having found what he wanted immediately ordered retirement of force without replying to enemys fire our loss man wounded six horses enemys loss unknown but must be enormous value of horses wounded about £150.

Cape Times (Capetown):—Morning opened with soft breezes from north just sufficient to shake mimosa bushes into sweet rustling music when I rose rode forward fully sure that I should see something and I did for before we rode forward two gallant companies of Mounted Infantry having, it is true, none of the shining pomp war for every button, every shining bit of steel or metal covered with kharki still little force looked gallant enough reminded me one James Grant's novels. Veldt was green with recent rains there was a freshness in the air everything was peaceful around me but in front was war and wounds and death. I stood on rising ground and saw before me a panorama unfolded the little band of British soldiers approaching the grim kopje where lay the watchful Boer. Closer and closer rode our men and now I could see them open out and work like a perfect machine round the bases of the kopje and then across the still morning air came the ominous crack! which told me that the grim game had commenced crack! crack! crack! followed in quick succession the Boers were firing on our men whose orders were simply to feel for the enemy, but they not only felt for him, but also felt him for as we retired one man was wounded in the fleshy part of the arm, and through six horses Boer bullets passed though without fatal effects. And then I rode back with the little force who in spite of the shower of lead which had passed through their ranks laughed and chaffed and thought only of their coming breakfast.

Cape Argus (Capetown):—Early this morning two companies Mounted Infantry under Major Jones proceeded west came into touch with enemy at Stinkosmulefontein Kopje which lies on farm belonging old Pete Bumbleknuckel who well known Rand circles his daughter married Jacobus Pimplewinkel who lost an eye fighting in the Langberg Campaign his cousin maternal side is Jack Jackson who is one of General Brabant's most active Scouts. But to return to the skirmish the mounted infantry succeeded in locating the enemy retired having effected their object with the loss of one man and six horses wounded on way back I met native who told me commander Boer force Lucus Prussic old personal friend mine who curious to relate still owes me five pounds which borrowed just before I left Johannesburg.

Daily Mail (London):—Shakespeare said better lie bed than go fighting early morning. I agree but Plutarch said man who lies abed when work abroad moral coward am not moral coward but all same wish people fight decent hours fancy going out fighting cold raw morning nothing in stomach but one miserable cup cocoa however went being late lost my way instead witnessing fight British side found myself next Boer who not perceive me firing over our men by happy interposition Providence managed reach our men leaving behind

The Transvaal War

enemy's hand one horse Cape cart pipe lucky get off with life insensibly reminded celebrated lines Heine "wo ist mein pferd und mein kaap-tart?" no breakfast when arrived camp kept thinking how Boers enjoying my sausages drinking my whisky Boers must be destroyed now, with spirit old Roman I now say "delendi sunt Boeri" though I have greater reason for saying so since Hannibal's soldiers never stole sausages and whisky from Roman correspondents.

Morning Post (London):—Stinkossmulefontein mounted Jones reconnoitred kopje half dismounted half rear enemy fired returned front. Experience say half gone left flank greater success turning movement only against Boers see Page 431 Napoleonic Legends also Life Moltke Page 239 Battle Schweitzerkässe. Had Jones read more Schweitzerkässe—no Moltke—would capture whole army waggons. Paper should impress importance this all arms.

Reuter (London):—Stinkossmulefontein Thursday via Disselboomlaagte per despatch riders—Yesterday two companies Mounted Infantry Major Jones under orders General Flanker proceeded reconnoitre kopje was present what some may call unimportant rearguard action can say was most important event entire expedition at distance 2033.4216 yards enemy opened fire. Jones dismounted A company, B company sent E.N.E. by E. direction rear enemy. At 6.3½ a.m. front rank left section A after returned fire 6.4¼ a.m. Trooper Metford, fourth man rear rank right section A received wound four inches below left elbow. Having ascertained strength enemy force returned camp object reconnaissance accomplished six horses missing five receiving wounds sixth left behind with staggers not shot as some declare.

Every one exerted himself to make the newspaper a success, and, as may be imagined, the journal became a source of merriment and delight. Nor was it without pathos. Mr. Rudyard Kipling, whose patriotic feeling had dragged him to the scene of action to view the British flag as erected there by Mr. Thomas Atkins, contributed his quota. On the death of Mr. G. W. Steevens, the brilliant young war correspondent, who died in Ladysmith, he wrote the following lines:—

"Through war and pestilence, red siege and fire,
Silent and self-contained, he drew his breath.
Brave not for show of courage, his desire:
Truth as he saw it, even to the death."

The Naval Brigade was now busy furbishing itself up, and veritably began to look as "fresh as paint." The guns received new coats, and the Bluejackets and marines made themselves spick and span. It is not often that Tommy waxes enthusiastic over Jack, but over the conduct of the Naval Brigade he was even eloquent. One writing home said:—"It was a good job the Boers did not make a stand at Bloemfontein, for it would have been a great pity to have had to destroy so fine a town. It would not have taken us long to have made the town a heap of stones, as in addition to our ordinary batteries, we had with us 'Joe Chamberlain' and five of his 'chums' belonging to the Naval Brigade. I hope when the war

Bloemfontein under British Rule

is over you at home will not forget the splendid service of the Naval men. I for one shall never forget the way in which they dragged their heavy guns across a most difficult country, or the manner in which they handled them in the face of the enemy." On the 21st the Brigade, under Captain Bearcroft, was inspected by Lord Roberts, who made one of the charming and appropriate speeches which have always rendered him so popular. He thanked the Brigade for the excellent work done in the campaign, and wished good luck to those about to rejoin their ship. The Chief also eulogised the splendid service of Captain Lambton and his men in saving the situation at Ladysmith.

Meanwhile on the east and south of the Free State things were not entirely comfortable. Commandant Olivier and his hordes, with their usual cunning, assisted by their remarkable mobility, were flitting about, now withdrawing before General Brabant, now evading the equally cunning and active French, now laying in wait for unprotected detachments, or hanging about railway lines in order to wreck them, but making themselves scarce with lightning velocity when a hint of British reinforcements was given by the appearance of a dust-cloud on the horizon. Fortunately our officers on the principal line of communications were so vigilant and cautious that the rail, running through some hundred miles of hostile ground, was safely protected.

On the 23rd of March an unlucky incident took place in the neighbourhood of Karee Siding. Some officers of the Guards Brigade rode off from Glen Camp in the early morning to make arrangements with the local farmers for ensuring forage and supplies. Glen Siding is a station on the Orange Free State Railway some fourteen miles north of Bloemfontein. Near here the Brigade of Guards and a force of Mounted Infantry had been stationed owing to the destruction by the Boers of a bridge on the Modder. Other troops were posted at intervals along the line of rail in order to watch over the enemy and prevent any further efforts at dynamite wrecking. On this day the party consisted of Colonel Crabbe, 3rd Grenadiers (who greatly distinguished himself in the battle of Belmont, and was wounded); Colonel Codrington, Coldstreams; Adjutant Hon. E. Lygon, who was also wounded at Belmont; Captain Trotter, and an orderly, Private Turner of the 1st Cape Volunteers. Why, when officers of high rank were so extremely valuable, these two Colonels should have thus recklessly exposed themselves has never been satisfactorily explained. The day was spent in making a tour of the farms, and everything went well until the middle of the afternoon. While riding along close to a homestead called Maas Farm, the Guards party discovered that four mounted men were making for a kopje as though to head them off. Whereupon the

The Transvaal War

party instantly advanced to meet the enemy. These promptly hid themselves behind the friendly boulders, where they were joined by three other Dutchmen, who assisted them in pouring a smart shower of lead upon the approaching officers. These, with only four Lee-Metfords between them, made an effort to get at the unseen enemy, but in a very few moments all the members of the British band had dropped. Colonel Crabbe had a bullet through arm and leg, and his horse was killed. Colonel Codrington was injured in the thigh. Lieutenant Lygon was shot through the heart and died instantaneously, while Captain Trotter and Private Turner were also wounded. The situation was a lamentable one. The veldt was strewn with helpless men, while from the kopje the Dutchmen continued to fire, the flute-like song of the Mauser falling ominously on the ears of the gallant men who were unable to move a limb in defence. Then between the prostrate Colonels a debate took place. Now that resistance was useless, each invited the other to display a white handkerchief. One refused because he declared he couldn't—his handkerchief was a crimson one. The other refused because he vowed he wouldn't—his handkerchief was a British one, and never manufactured for waving at Boers. But, finally, he was brought to reason, and immediately on the display of the magic square the Boers ceased fire. They now emerged from their boulders, tended the wounded, spoke apologetically of their good marksmanship, and finally carried off their prizes to the neighbouring farm. Here the prisoners were fed and carefully looked after till evening. A messenger was sent to the Guards' Camp at Glen requesting surgeons and an ambulance to remove the wounded to their headquarters, and on the arrival of the medical party the officers were given up by their captors and allowed to return to camp in their charge. They were relieved of their warlike belongings, firearms, and glasses, &c., but their private effects remained in their pockets undisturbed.

The body of the Hon. E. Lygon was also removed, but the next day, in accordance with the wishes of his family, it was interred in the wild and lonely spot where he met his death.

On the 27th of March Sir Alfred Milner arrived at Bloemfontein on a private visit, and was met by Lord Roberts and his Staff. General French returned from Thabanchu after having occupied the town and captured the flour-mills.

Lord Kitchener also reappeared. His operations had been short and to the point. He came on the same day from Prieska, having received the submission of some 200 rebels, and put to flight such of them as had no taste for an encounter with "the man of ice and iron" as the Italians called the hero of Omdurman.

Towards Ladybrand news was less satisfactory. The British

Bloemfontein under British Rule

loyalists, owing to their sympathy with their fellow-countrymen, were subjected to annoyance and cruelty. Many of them were captured, imprisoned, and some were sent to Kroonstad, which had been declared to be the capital of the Free State. Daily, English farmers were commandeered, robbed, threatened. The smart activities of Olivier had produced a lamentable effect on the state of affairs, as it was now impossible to afford full protection to the farmers in the south-east and east who had surrendered their rifles, and who were subjected to the vengeful barbarity of the Boers. The mistaken policy of leniency to the Free Staters was now being demonstrated, the "live and let live" principle having helped Olivier to gather together under his banner such of the enemy as had met us with a Janus-faced surrender. Those who fight and run away, live to fight another day; and on this cautious code the Free Staters had modelled their manners, so as to reserve themselves for further truculent exploits. Again British magnanimity was mistaken for weakness, and the temporary success of their manœuvres in the east was causing the Boers to indulge in reprisals of abominable kind on British born people, whose action in surrendering was the only possible one in the circumstances. A rumour existed that the late President Steyn had issued orders that all British burghers refusing to fight with the Boer army would be shot.

On the 27th of March a formidable figure was removed from the drama in South Africa. General Joubert, who had long been in somewhat delicate health (so much so that in his campaigns he was accompanied by his wife, who cooked for him), now suddenly succumbed to an acute attack of inflammation of the kidneys. General Joubert was much esteemed by all who knew him. In him the Boers lost not only a remarkable commander, but an enlightened and level-headed politician. It was declared that had the General succeeded to the Presidency in 1895, the whole Uitlander agitation would have ceased to exist. The deceased Dutchman had moderately progressive views, and he announced his belief that the demand for a five years' franchise was a reasonable one. He also discountenanced the idea of war, and in many ways used the influence he had with his countrymen in the cause of reason and liberality of outlook. At times he seemed to desire friendly co-operation with Great Britain. For this cause he was accused by his more narrow countrymen of being half-hearted in the Africander cause, and was intrigued against by Mr. Kruger and such of the subsidised sympathisers as the President could gather around him. Still his attitude may be gauged by his famous speech in 1878:—

"I have been to England, and have with my own eyes seen the might of that mighty nation. And let me tell you that England is a very mighty nation—in my opinion the mightiest in the world. But,

The Transvaal War

thank God, it is not almighty." And his motto, which he invented for himself, was, "Trust in God, and fight England."

On hearing the news of General Joubert's death, Lord Roberts sent the following to President Kruger:—

"I have just received the news of General Joubert's death, and desire at once to offer my sincere condolence to your Honour and the burghers of the South African Republic on the sad event.

"I would ask you to convey to General Joubert's family the expression of my most respectful sympathy in their sad bereavement, and to assure them also from me that all ranks of her Majesty's forces serving in South Africa share my feeling of deep regret at the sudden and untimely end of so distinguished a general, who devoted his life to the service of his country, and whose personal gallantry was only surpassed by his humane conduct and chivalrous bearing under all circumstances."

On the afternoon of the 29th the funeral took place, and many wreaths were sent by the British officers in the Pretoria prison.

THE BATTLE OF KARREE

Karree Station is situated some seventy miles north of Bloemfontein, and here the Dutchmen were distributed on kopjes commanding the railway west and north. As they promised to be an impediment to further progress, Lord Roberts decided that they must be removed. Generals Tucker, Wavell, and Chermiside, with infantry and artillery, were already in the vicinity. To join them General French started from Bloemfontein with reinforcements on the 28th of March. These consisted of a Cavalry Brigade composed of 12th Lancers, the Carabineers, the Greys, the Australian Horse, a Mounted Infantry Brigade, Kitchener's Horse, and three Vickers-Maxim guns under Colonel Le Gallais.

The artillery planted their shells with admirable exactness on the kopjes west of Karree where the enemy had ensconced himself. Meanwhile, in a wonderful and almost invisible manner, an enveloping movement was organised, Colonel Le Gallais, the Mounted Infantry, and Kitchener's Horse operating on the right wing, while General French with 1st and 3rd Cavalry Brigades were on the left. General Chermiside's Brigade was on the right centre, and General Wavell's on the left centre. About midday the enemy was discovered near a farmhouse some two miles east of Karree. The Dutchmen then began to fire from some small kopjes, on the infantry. From this point they were routed by the smart action of the Norfolks, but they continually reappeared, there being some five thousand of them, under Grobler, occupying four different positions, with a frontage some three miles long. Both ends of the position were strengthened by trenches and guns. The right flank consisted of a thickly wooded hill connected with the main position by a ridge



Mr M. T. STEYN.
LATE PRESIDENT ORANGE FREE STATE.

(From "South Africa" by permission of the Publishers.)

The Battle of Karree

also covered with scrub. The left was protected by an incrustation of minor kopjes, and round these fastnesses the Boers clung tenaciously.

The finest performance of the day was that of the East Lancshires, who, with comparatively small loss, eventually succeeded in moving the enemy from his main stronghold. The City Imperial Volunteers also distinguished themselves, the men advancing the first time under fire with the utmost coolness.

While the enemy were retreating from the assault of the Lancshires General French's guns opened on them, and with such good result that the fight was practically at an end, for the Boers having begun to beat a retreat were forced finally to scuttle off as fast as legs would carry them. Till sunset the artillery continued to direct deadly attentions to the various kopjes, thus deciding the Dutchmen that their efforts to run and return would be of no avail. Dusk was setting in, and consequently the cavalry failed to pursue them, and they succeeded once more in getting away clear. Owing to the rapidity with which the night came on, most of the troops, who had experienced some very trying hours of fighting, bivouacked where they were.

The battery on the right centre was unable to come into action owing to the nature of the ground, which was sliced with ravines and blotched with irregularities, but nevertheless the upshot of the day's work was satisfactory, as the country as far as the little town of Brandfort—important to us in our future operations—was swept clear of the enemy, and henceforth the British outposts covered the ground gained and preserved it from further incursions of the nimble Dutchmen.

The casualties were numerous :—

King's Own Scottish Borderers.—*Killed*.—Capt. A. C. Going. *Wounded*.—Lieut. E. M. Young, dangerously (since dead); Second Lieut. B. J. Coulson; Capt. W. D. Sellar. Norfolk Regiment.—Capt. E. Peebles; Capt. A. H. Luard. Lincolnshire Regiment.—Capt. L. Edwards. South Wales Borderers.—Lieut. W. C. Curgenvin. Hampshire Regiment.—Lieut. C. N. French. 1st Dragoon Guards.—Capt. W. M. Marter (Brigade Major).

CHAPTER VIII

MAFEKING IN MARCH

FIVE months of beleaguerment and no nearer the end! Ruefully the caged crowd began to draw pictures of themselves as weird Rip Van Winkles, curious fossilised things that would some day be unearthed by the inquiring historian. They wondered whether Ginevra in her sealed oaken chest felt more lost to the world, more forgotten, more impossible of rescue! "We," said some one who shall be nameless, "we are all modern Ginevras—only no one seems to look for us, and, by-and-by, perhaps no one will even mourn. It is five months, you see! Ginevra was probably asphyxiated in five hours, whereas we—we do the thing more sluggishly—more painfully—we starve mentally and physically by slow degrees. If we get air, it is air that is best not respired." Nevertheless, these people sent forth to the world radiant accounts of their doings, and sported the mask of Punchinello over the visage of Melpomene. It was very British, this jocose unreserve that was a still more tragic reserve, this festivity on the lips with famine gnawing at the vitals.

Fever, the fever of heat, ennui, and mental and bodily depression, had begun to assail the unfortunate besieged. The climate of Mafeking—in ordinary circumstances most inspiring—was becoming tainted, and the feeling of creeping malaria swept over all who were forced to remain cooped within the sorry regions. But the chief on whose wits the whole community depended defied the malign influence of his surroundings. During the day, with reserved, adamant calm, he busied himself inventing the thousand and one projects by which might be defeated any possible move of the enemy, in reviving the spirits of his followers, and providing for their appetites, in fighting against the encroachments of disease and retaining the perfect discipline, which was no easy matter in so small a radius with so many conflicting emotions to be dealt with. At night, stealthy as a cat, he would creep forth to make the necessary investigations and acquaint himself with the state of the force opposing him, and if possible discover the Boer machinations of the future. Creeping along the veldt all eyes and ears, he gathered inspiration from a glimmer, the sound of a hoof, the flutter of bird and rustle of bush. Even the colour of the darkness in east and west gave him unspoken hints of designs nefarious

Mafeking in March

—secrets or prophetic warnings of movements to be. And then he would return from his mysterious peregrinations primed with notions ingenious and plans elaborate, and remain for the day under the roof of the verandah of the headquarters office concocting some of the multitudinous schemes which confounded the Boers and frustrated their best efforts at assault.

On the 3rd of March a little peace was secured owing to the disappearance of the Teuton who worked the huge gun. He had been what was described as "providentially potted." On the other hand a more valuable life than that of the German mercenary had been sacrificed, for Sergeant-Major Taylor of the Cape Boys, who had been doing splendid work for his country, fell early in the morning mortally wounded. The Boers fired something under forty shells before breakfast, and might have pursued their activities the whole day had the loss of their chief gunner not damped their ardour and forced them to postpone their activities to a more convenient period. They nevertheless "sniped" at intervals throughout the following Sunday, doubtless with the righteous desire to avenge their artillery-man.

New brooms sweep clean. As a fresh gunner had come upon the scene, there now began some more active bombardment. But the activity was no longer what it had been, and but for the meagreness of the fare, and the fear that the rations might diminish till they became invisible, the besieged would have got on fairly well. On the 7th there died an adventurous Scotsman whose history would have delighted the heart of the late Robert Louis Stevenson. Major Baillie in his sparkling account of the siege gave a brief outline of his romantic career. "Trooper M'Donald joined the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in 1847, served in the Crimea (French and Sardinian medals and two clasps) and in the Indian Mutiny, was kidnapped when embarking home by Americans, fought for the North against the South, deserted the North and fought for the South, afterwards went to Australia, thence to New Zealand, and served in the Maori War, in which he was taken prisoner. Later he came to South Africa, served in the Basuto War with Sir Charles Warren's expedition, Carrington's Horse, the Bechuanaland Border Police, and transferred to the Cape Police, in which corps he has died of hardships and old age, fighting the Boers." The Major went on to say: "He is not the only Crimean veteran we have here. Both the Navy and Army are represented. Mr. Ellis joined the Royal Navy in 1854, served in the Baltic and the Black Sea, came to Africa and served in the Galika War. Mr. Brasier served in the Crimea and the Mutiny, and there are others of whose records of service I am not so certain. The contrast between them and the cadet corps, utilised for orderly work, &c., is remarkable, and

The Transvaal War

if the Boers have their greybeards and boys fighting, why so have we." The cadet corps was composed of youths ranging from the ages of ten to fifteen years, game little fellows who did their duty splendidly.

The great news of the capture of Cronje and his horde now served to raise the drooping spirits of the community. It was also reported that Snyman was on the move, and that Malan, who was opposing Colonel Plumer, had come into the neighbourhood of Mafeking. Sounds of rejoicing came from the Boer camp, and on the following day Boers with their field kit were seen to be clearing off. The information that the force was marching to Bloemfontein, that Cape Colony was being swept of rebels, that Ladysmith was relieved, now poured in, and caused the whole place to become simply inebriated with joy.

On the 9th of March, to commemorate the victory at Paardeberg, a special siege slip was published at the newspaper office. The news was announced in the form of a poster, and concluded with the effectively printed information: "Cronje a prisoner. Snyman to be hanged." Copies were afterwards liberally pelted into the Boer quarter, who digested the news with their morning biltong.

On the 11th (Sunday) a truce was observed. The Colonel, writing at that date, said:—

"Our men, sitting upon the parapets, held a friendly conversation with a detachment of the enemy, and an enterprising photographer endeavoured to get them into line while he photographed them, but they were evidently suspicious, and feared the temptation to turn a Maxim upon them instead of a camera would prove too great. Small parties appeared throughout the day, and amicable relations were maintained until dark."

The Boers outside were a hardy and stalwart lot, brawny and uncouth and unkempt, though from a distance not unpicturesque. In their rough-and-tumble attire no two were alike. Some were slouching in velveteen coats and soft felt hats, others in black jackets with "billycocks," and all with the inevitable well-worn neckerchief that some one suggested might "come in handy for turtle soup." Their bandoliers and their Martini and Mauser rifles gave them a certain uniformity of aspect, but otherwise they seemed the most motley gang that the hands of fate could have shuffled together. Some of the Boers did not approve of the camera, and were inclined to suspect the British of attempting dodges equal to their own, but others took a pride in being portrayed.

A remarkable, almost a pathetic, feature of Mafeking fighting was the strange ability of both sides to fraternise when hostilities were suspended. The fact was that the combatants were linked together by ties of relationship so mysteriously interwoven that the fights partook of the nature of civil war—brothers and cousins-in-law, and, in one case, two brothers, contending on either side of the

Mafeking in March

battlefield. Naturally, when the bloody business of their lives was ended, they were inclined to foregather, to compare losses and make kindly inquiries strangely inconsistent with the trend of their antagonistic pursuits. The Colonel further reported :—

“Sergeant Currie has been promoted to the rank of a commissioned officer. He has thus risen by gallantry and hard work from a third-class private to be a lieutenant within five months. Early on Monday morning (12th) the enemy recommenced the bombardment with their six-inch gun, which had been comparatively silent the previous week, now firing shrapnel. Used against troops in the open the fire of these projectiles is ineffectual as long as cover can be obtained, but they are more dangerous to persons passing to the front from the streets of the town. A detachment of Colonial native troops, under Lieutenant Mackenzie, made an advance on Jackal Tree Fort, the position originally occupied by the siege gun on the south-western heights. The Boers got wind of the movement, and evacuated the position before it could be carried through. To cover the advance on Jackal Tree Fort, a detachment of Baralong natives were despatched to make a feint attack on Fort Snyman, a new work recently erected by the Boers, and threatening the most advanced western position. They succeeded in creeping to within thirty yards of the enemy, many of whom were sleeping outside, and when near the fort poured in two or three rapid volleys. Trooper Webb got sufficiently close to the fort to blow out the brains of one of the enemy. The natives then beat a rapid retreat, in accordance with instructions previously given to them, having inflicted some losses upon the enemy. In the brickfields the Cape Boys were reinforced by a detachment of Protectorate troops under Captain Fitzclarence.”

All were much perturbed at the sad news of the death of the genial young trooper, Webb of the Cape Police, who was shot through the head while on guard in the brickfields. This gallant fellow had been previously wounded in October, and had been carried off under fire by Trooper Stevens, and had only just returned to duty when he lost his life—possibly in revenge for the act described above.

According to Colonel Baden-Powell's despatch of this date, a raiding party of Baralongs, who had gone out on their own initiative, encountered a patrol of the enemy, and opened fire upon them, killing one man, whose rifle and bandolier they secured. The enemy retired for reinforcements, but the Baralongs ambushed these reinforcements from a convenient ditch at Madibi Siding, and the enemy fell back in confusion, losing six men. The Baralongs, being unable to cope with long-range fire, then commenced to retire on Mafeking, having captured two horses with saddles and bridles. Finding the Boers were in pursuit, and fearing the arrival of reinforcements from the investing forces, however, they returned to a kopje in the vicinity of Madibi. Here they maintained their position until dark, and then made good their retreat into the stadt, having lost one killed and bringing in a few wounded. Three of the party were missing.

It was impossible to prevent the Baralongs from retaliating by

The Transvaal War

raids of this description upon those whom they called the murderers of their women and children. Mr. C. G. Bell, however, rendered invaluable service in dealing with the natives, and a board was appointed by the Colonel commanding to go thoroughly into the native question.

The Colonel described the effects of the bombardment on the following day :—

“On Tuesday a shrapnel shell, bursting just about my bomb-proof, sprinkled the wall of the fire brigade office with bullets, which entered the bedrooms of Dixon’s Hotel. These were unoccupied, but afterwards a steel-plated shell passed through the wall of the office, and when spent fell beneath the table, and was scrambled for by the staff of clerks. In the afternoon a shell, bursting in the court-house, killed two natives and wounded four, slightly injuring another. All these belonged to an unfortunate working party who happened to be passing at the moment. A woman was also slightly wounded.”

The conduct of the Boers towards the natives varied according to the policy of the commandant engaged in subduing Mafeking. A Scottish farmer who remained some ten miles south of the heroic hamlet, said that in the beginning of the war the Boers were not so severe on the natives as they were later on. About Christmas-time natives began to come out of Mafeking and loot cattle to take back into the town. Then the Boers were ordered to give no quarter to natives. If this order had had reference to those found looting cattle, it would only have been according to the rules of warfare, but the Boers were told to shoot down any strange native found in the veldt without a pass from their people ; and this was done in a very large number of cases, their bodies being left to rot on the veldt as if they were dogs. In some cases they had come out of Mafeking, which need hardly be wondered at, in view of the scarcity of food amongst the natives there. Considering the risk run, it was wonderful how natives could be found willing to creep through the Boer lines with despatches ; but the natives are certainly anything but cowards.

Towards the middle of March the attitude of the Boers towards the natives improved, and they began to allow fugitives to escape through their lines. The reason for this change of front was attributed to a desire to conciliate the Baralongns in the event of Boer defeat, and to keep them from raiding into Boer territory when their time for reprisals might come.

Native spies brought in all manner of rumours, to the effect that Colonel Plumer’s armoured train had reached Pitsani Pothlugo, notable as Jameson’s starting-point on his famous raid, and that the enemy was concentrating at Ramathlabama to prevent the advance of the relieving force. But news certainly lost nothing by passing through the medium of native channels, and the inhabitants of

Mafeking in March

Mafeking were not over credulous. The great ideal of the Bechu-
anas was Dr. Jameson, and he, it was averred, was coming down
from Buluwayo with an army to relieve Mafeking. One rumour
had it that the famous raider had totally annihilated a Boer laager
with a bomb from a balloon! Over an extensive area, west and
south of Mafeking, all the natives had been compelled to leave their
homes, and were placed near the Transvaal border with a view—it
was thought—to prevent despatches passing through to Mafeking.
Whatever the object, such a proceeding, especially in the wet season,
was very cruel. The poor people were robbed of their herds and



NATIVE CHURCH, MAFEKING.

household goods, and driven away, and deposited like cattle wherever the Boers thought fit to place them.

On the 18th the Boers were found in occupation of the new trench which had just been triumphantly constructed by the besieged. It was, as Mr. Neilly said, "like the soldier crab who gets into the shell of a winkle when the winkle has gone out for a walk. As a rule the soldier crab keeps what he has gained, but in this case the winkle came back and recovered his shell." He did so very promptly. Lieutenant Feltham and a small party advanced and threw bombs at the intruders, which caused them quickly to evacuate their

The Transvaal War

trenches. Then some of the Bechuanaland Volunteers "speeded the parting guest" with a smart fusillade from the flank, and the prized trench was recovered.

On the 20th the Boers appeared to be breaking up their western laager, and on the 23rd it was discovered that the enemy had evacuated his positions in the brickfields. These were promptly annexed and dismantled by the Mafeking men. Major Panzera had what some one called "a real sporting day." From morn till night he plied his Hotchkiss and kept the Boers active till dusk. After dark the acetyline searchlight built by the railwaymen was erected at the main work, but no demonstration from the direction of the enemy took place. Then started off Lieutenant Murray and trooper Mallalen (Cape Police) to reconnoitre. On reaching the enemy's sap they crawled round cautiously on hands and knees to investigate. It was a ticklish moment, but they were rewarded. They peered in and made the discovery that the Boers had vanished. They crept still farther along the connecting trench to the rear of the main work and made assurance doubly sure. The Dutchmen were flown. So rapid had been their flight that biltong, biscuits, and journals were left behind. Quick as thought the trench was dismantled. Then Sergeant Page (Protectorate Regiment) burrowed about for the mine which he and Mr. Kiddy had laid in the direction of this trench in the early days of the siege. The Boers had "slimly" unearthed the dynamite, and presently it was discovered that the evacuated trench was connected by a copper wire with the enemy's line. This was carefully cut. Then its direction was traced, and a neat little plot of the Boers exposed itself to view. They had arranged some 250 pounds of war gelatine and dynamite in the trench, which, at a given moment, a touch from the wily Dutchman on the lookout was meant to explode and blow some of the garrison into the air.

This failure served to depress the Boers, and for a time their siege gun ceased fire, something having gone wrong with its works. Colonel Baden-Powell was very proud of the brickfield's success and those who contributed to it. Colonel Vyvyan, Inspector Marsh (Cape Police), Majors Panzera and Fitzclarence, Inspector Browne, Lieutenant Currie (Cape Police), Sergeant Page, and trooper Thompson (Cape Police), were all eulogised in general orders.

The captured newspapers afforded great satisfaction to the beleaguered company, for they recounted the entry of Lord Roberts to Bloemfontein, the surrender of Cronje, and the relief of Ladysmith. The intelligence was intensely heartening, and the garrison seemed to gain in backbone—not that it had ever been deficient in that quality. But now its obstinate resistance of the Boers was resumed with renewed zest.

Mafeking in March

It must be noted that besides the Baralongs, who defended their own stadt, were four other black contingents—the Fingoes, under Webster; the Cape Boys, under Lieutenant Currie, B.S.C.P., who succeeded Captain Goodyear when that officer was wounded; a detachment of Baralongs, under Sergeant Abrams; and a Zulu crowd, called the “Black Watch,” under Mackenzie. All these contingents “put their backs into it,” and rejoiced in making things as hot and uncomfortable for the enemy as they could.

In default of other amusement some of the inhabitants interested themselves in the Dutch snipers, and began to grow so familiar with them that they resorted to the primeval mode of christening, that of designating each individual by his personal attributes. One would be called “Bow-legs,” another “Bluebeard,” or “Draggle Beard,” and so on. One Rip Van Winkle was particularly admired. Despite his years and his probable “rheumatics,” he would take up his post from dawn till dusk, and snipe with persistence worthy a better cause. His patience and perseverance somewhat endeared him to the garrison, and there was felt to be something missing in the excitement of life when it was found that he, like many of his compatriots, had been “curried,” otherwise “dished,” by Lieutenant Currie, B.S.C.P., and his ever-active contingent. These cheery fellows in off moments were ready enough to exchange jocosities with the foe, almost treating him, despite his barbarism, as one of themselves.

The correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette* quoted a sample scene to describe the style of friendly intercourse that took place.

“Cape ‘boy’ to Boer: ‘Could you hit a bottle?’ ‘Yes, I think so. Put one up.’ (A hand rises cautiously to the top of the British trench, and a black bottle is deposited there.)

“Boer: ‘I can’t see it. Put it higher.’ (The Cape ‘boy’ balances a hat on the head of the bottle and says, ‘There you are; you can see that.’) The Boer fires, and the bullet flies wide.

“Cape ‘boy’: ‘Wide to the left.’ (Boer fires again and asks, ‘Is that nearer?’)

“Cape ‘boy’: ‘Rather high.’ Boer fires a third shot that comes through the loophole.

“The Cape soldier announces the result, and the Boer, fearing that he will lose his good reputation for marksmanship, and angered by his bad display, sings out—

“‘Look here, you rooinek, we were sent here not to shoot bottles, but men.’”

Curiously enough many of the Boers were hopelessly ignorant and unsophisticated. They hardly knew what they were fighting for, and one raw individual was heard to declare that he didn’t believe the Queen had caused this war, but the foreman of the

The Transvaal War

English Raad. They retained their bumptiousness in all circumstances. After a victory they would brag of the number of British killed, about 80,000 as a rule, their news being gleaned from the imaginative columns of the *Standard and Diggers' News*. On the subject of defeat they were reticent, but fairly confident that the Dutch flag in a month or two was bound to be floating over South Africa.

On Sunday the 25th, a great Siege Exhibition took place—an exhibition notable for its originality. Among the articles on view were bonnets which had been trimmed with "siege" materials by ladies of the town. These were never tired of showing their usefulness and versatility, but, as Lady Sarah Wilson—a host in herself—declared in the *Daily Mail*, "even the dogs played a prominent part in the siege. One belonging to the base commandant was wounded no less than three times; another, a rough Irish terrier, accompanied the Protectorate Regiment in all its engagements; a third amused itself by running after the small Maxim shells, barking loudly and trying hard to retrieve pieces; while the Resident Commissioner's dog, a prudent animal, whenever she heard the alarm-bell tore into the bomb-proof attached to her master's redoubt, and remained there till the explosion was over. The sagacious creatures rendered themselves most valuable, for no sooner had the warning bell announced the firing of a shell than the town dogs began to bark loudly in all quarters, thus enabling persons who, owing to the direction of the wind or other circumstances, had failed to note the signal, to escape to their shelters." The natives were much more apathetic, and Reuter's correspondent gave curious instances of their stupidity and *laissez faire*. "They would gather in great crowds round the soup-kitchens in the town, and when bells were rung warning them that the enemy's 6-inch gun had been fired they were too lazy to take cover in the lee of the surrounding buildings, and had to be driven to do so by means of sticks and sjamboks. Many would rather die than work, and were too lazy to attempt the now comparatively safe journey to Kanya."

It was annoying to hear perpetual rumours of relief and to find relief as far off as ever. Runners continually brought in telegrams of congratulation, which added not a little to the bitterness of incarceration. At one moment Plumer seemed to be coming; he was said to be only eleven miles off, and the town was in ecstasies; at another bombardment began briskly as ever, and spirits descended to zero. One of the besieged, writing home on March 22, said:—

"Things are going on as usual. Every one is heartily sick and tired of the siege. Colonel Plumer, with 1500 men, is only about thirty-five miles away, with provisions for us. . . . Every one here feels the want of more, better, and varied food. A friend of ours was very ill for ten days, and the only

Mafeking in March

comforts the doctor could order were two tins of milk and some lunch biscuits ! There is no margarine left in the town, and the Commissariat Department is calling in all the starch. The hospital is very full ; and there is a good deal of malarial and typhoid fever. . . . Sometimes the bread is awful, black, and made from locally-crushed oats, with all the husks on, simply split in long pieces. We are all downright hungry, and cannot buy a bit of food, except on some special occasion. Last Sunday Weil's store was allowed to sell certain articles of food, *e.g.* pea flour and margarine ; former, 2s. 6d. a tin ; latter, 3s. per lb. The crush outside the store was so great that women fainted, and some were waiting for hours, and then unable to get in. . . . The railings of the park and tennis-courts are used for firing, and we are authorised to use our fences for the same purpose. Our meat is good, but poor and tough. We almost entirely depend upon the natives looting enemy's cattle, and sometimes we have horse-flesh, but that I cannot manage, so on those days I am hungrier than ever. . . . My husband is quarter-master-sergeant in charge of the rations—not a very enviable billet. The whole town is on rations. We are all under martial law, and Colonel Baden-Powell looks after us all, and we may be very thankful that the defence of Mafeking has been entrusted to such a capable man."

The menu was not variegated. You took your choice between a species of porridge (made from the husks of oats fermented for some hours prior to boiling) and a noxious brown biscuit, or, as the Indians called it, "chupattie." But it had none of the savouriness of the chupattie, and was described as a cross between a ship's biscuit and a baked brick. It was certainly filling at the price, so filling, in fact, that those who devoured it suffered from what was styled "hippopotamus on the chest" for some hours afterwards.

March 27th was described as the hottest day in the siege, the mud walls of Mafeking being liberally dosed to the tune of 200 shells by Creusots and quick-firing Krupps. As many as 250 shells were said to have been fired into the town, while the 100-pounder was responsible for 70. Sergeant Abrams, of the Cape Police, an officer who had been in the thick of the whole siege, was caught by a high-velocity shell and had the misfortune to lose his foot. Some of the shells penetrated the bomb-proofs, and one or two persons were more or less injured. It was calculated that during the sixty-four days of the siege as many as 1300 shells from the 100-pound Creusot, independently of minor missiles, had descended in the midst of the valorous community. Some of the shells were sold as curios and fetched as much as five guineas apiece ; rarer ones sold for ten or twelve. The losses of the garrison up to this date were : Killed and missing : 7 officers and 93 men, besides 53 native and other non-combatants. Wounded : 11 officers and 38 men, besides 114 native and other non-combatants.

The congratulations of the Lord Mayor of London on the relief now arrived, and all began to hope that "coming events cast their shadows before." But cruel disappointment followed.

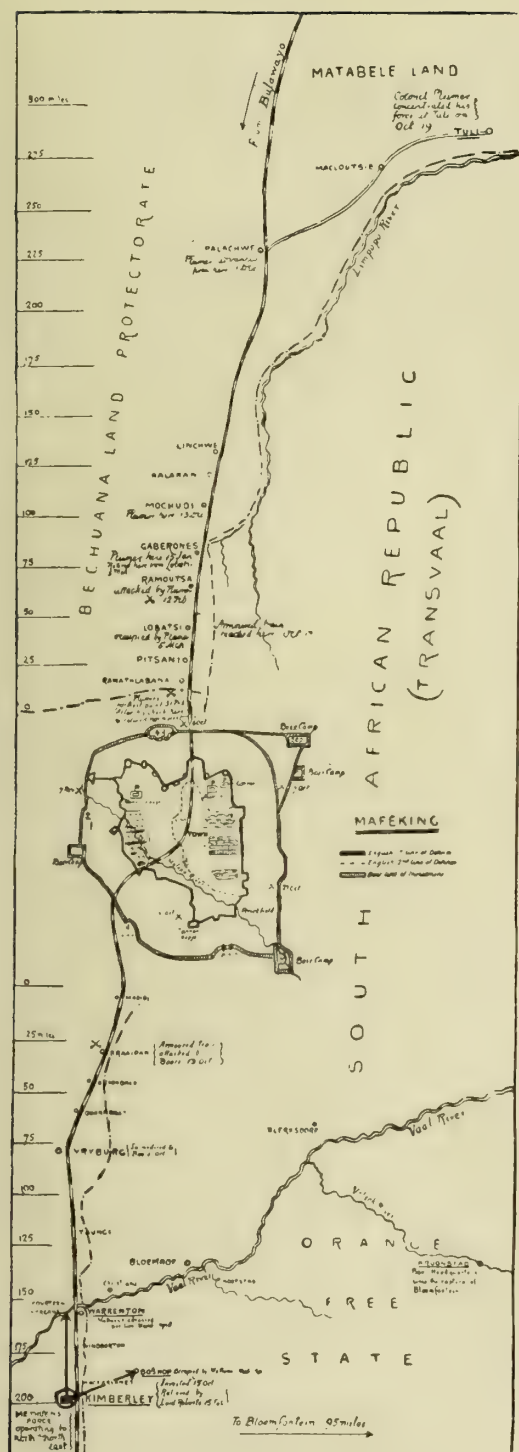
The Transvaal War

Heavy firing was reported from the north on the 31st, and there was tremendous excitement. One and all agreed that it was Colonel Plumer coming to the rescue. They hoped, they prayed, and when at last the sounds died away hope died with them. The next morning explained it. General Snyman sent in a letter under a flag of truce requesting Colonel Baden-Powell to send an ambulance for Colonel Plumer's dead! A horrible description of the battlefield "strewn with corpses" followed, and caused deep concern to those who were the cause of the gallant enterprise which had cost so many lives. Fortunately only three bodies were found, but these had rifled pockets, while the boots of one had been removed. The action of removing boots from the dead savours of the barbaric, but it must be remembered that the Boers, and indeed some of our own men, were almost soleless. War brings about strange conditions and strange ethics. A trooper, one of the remnant of the Light Brigade, told a strange story of how on that "great occasion" he came on the corpse of a Russian officer magnificently booted, while he himself could barely hobble in his tatters. He could not resist the prize, and possessed himself of the much-needed apparel. He was in the act of going off in triumph when his conscience smote him; he returned, and taking off his own boots reverentially clothed the feet of the dead man! He appeased his qualms by arguing that exchange was not robbery!

COLONEL PLUMER'S OPERATIONS

Colonel Plumer lived in the hope of joining hands with Colonel Baden-Powell at Mafeking, and messages were successfully interchanged between the two officers. Life in the north was occupied mainly with skirmishes and the repairs of railway lines and culverts, which were needed along almost every mile of route. Between Gaberones and Crocodile Pools the engineers worked arduously, under the protection of an armoured train and a strong body of dismounted men. Very useful information was received of the Boers' whereabouts from papers contained in a Boer mail-bag captured between Sequani and Sauerpoord. The Boers were found to be in force at Crocodile Pools, and to have in their possession two cannon and two machine-guns, and here it was evident they meant to harass any progressive movement of the British.

On the 11th of January Colonel Plumer, with a portion of his forces, arrived near Mochudi. The Boers—about 200—were reported to have gathered some thirty miles to the south-east, while others were entrenched on the kopjes by the railway at Crocodile Pools. With them were said to be guns in charge of German officers—an objectionable discovery for the British, who were almost



MAP SHOWING THE ADVANCE FROM THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH FOR THE RELIEF OF MAFAKING.¹

The above sketch-plan of Mafeking shows the Boer trenches and the British lines of defence round the town, with the localities and dates of the principal fights which have taken place between the besiegers and besieged. Above and below the plan (though not, of course, upon the same scale) there is a map of the country between Kimberley and Tuli. The margin is divided into spaces of twenty-five miles, measuring from Mafeking north and south, and the advance of Plumer from the north and of Methuen from the south is shown step by step.

The Transvaal War

gunless! There was reason to suppose that discontent reigned among the Boers owing to scarcity of provisions, and that they were longing to throw up the sponge and return to their farms. They found life in the trenches and kopjes not what is vulgarly described as "all beer and skittles," and began to think of the coming seasons which would find them empty as the fabled grasshopper in winter.

Some of the troops also proceeded to Gaberones, where three armoured trains were kept active. On the 12th a Boer patrol made an effort to burn a bridge a mile north of the station, but was frustrated by the promptness with which Lieutenant Wallis brought No. 3 armoured train on the scene. When the enemy fell back on the station they were welcomed by No. 1 armoured train under Colonel Llewellyn, and the welcome was so unexpected and so hearty that the enemy bolted. Owing to the darkness they got off in safety. Reconnaissances were made, and it was discovered that the Boers were located one mile south of Crocodile Pools.

Major Bird made a reconnaissance on the 23rd of January—with four squadrons of the Rhodesian Regiment—in the direction of a Boer laager. In consequence of a storm of rain operations could not be carried as far as intended, but some of the enemy were dislodged from a hill, and two horses and two Transvaal flags were captured.

On the 31st an animated artillery duel took place between Colonel Plumer and Commandant Eloff, and on the following day it was some satisfaction to see the Boers busily engaged in repairing the havoc wrought by the British 12½-pounder on their fort. On the 2nd of February more activities took place. Major Bird, with 150 mounted infantry and one 7-pounder, made a demonstration on the right flank of the Boer position. This occupied a ridge running for a mile and a half from south-west to north-east. In the centre of the ridge was a nek, which was protected on either side by a fringe of Boer sharpshooters. This nek became the object of British attention, and Lieutenants Harland and Blunt with their men poured on it some forty volleys, to which the Boers replied, but without serious effect. While the rattling of musketry was kept up by the mounted infantry, a 7-pounder, manned by the British South African Police, escorted by troopers under Captain MacLaren, shelled the nek. Whereupon the Boers brought into play a 12½-pounder, which forced the British 7-pounder to retire. The weapon, however, was met by one of its own calibre, which was posted near Basuto kopje, and a spirited contest ensued. On the 4th of February the hostile guns were silenced by well-directed shells adroitly dropped by Lieutenant Montmorency in the middle of the Boer fortress.

Colonel Plumer, though still too weak to make a decisive move

Colonel Plumer's Operations

on, was bent on energetically annoying the Boers, but night escapades for some time were stopped by infamous weather. On the first opportunity Major Bird devised a midnight attack, which, unfortunately, was more costly than successful. In dense darkness, on the night of the 11th of February, the troops deployed at the base of a thorny and rocky ridge at Crocodile Pools Bridge, where the enemy was entrenched. No sooner had the men neared the summit than they came on wire entanglements and thorny scrub, and in surmounting wire and bush they necessarily made some noise. This set the Boer dogs barking and the Boer pickets blazing with their rifles. Thereupon Major Bird ordered a bayonet charge. He had forbidden rifle fire lest it should betray the position of the storming party. Before the men could get to close quarters, however, the Dutchmen exploded dynamite mines and followed the fracas with volleys of musketry. The result was disastrous to the British, and Major Bird ordered a retreat. Captain French (Royal Irish Regiment) was among the killed. Seven of the party were more or less severely injured. At first the Boers refused to give up the dead and wounded. When Archdeacon Upcher and Father Hartmann, under cover of the white flag, made the demand, they declared that they could not respect the symbol, as General Buller had stated that the British would no longer respect it. They eventually gave up five of the dead, but refused for some time to part with the wounded. Among these were Major Straker and Colonel Hon. H. White (British South African Police).

On the 26th of February Colonel Plumer, after many strenuous efforts and continued fighting, occupied the enemy's position at Crocodile Pools, the Boers having taken themselves off and gone south to Lobatsi. Trains were now moving from the Pools to Ramoutsa. A cairn was erected over the spot where the valiant officer, Captain French, met his fate. The wounds received by Major Straker in the disastrous night attack were mending slowly, and great hopes were entertained of his ultimate recovery.

Colonel Plumer and his little force, numbering some 700 in all, continued to suffer many harassments, to fight and to struggle manfully for the assistance of Mafeking, whose relief they believed could not be long delayed. To help in this relief was their perpetual aim, and to this end Colonel Plumer accumulated a vast quantity of stores at Kanya, some sixty miles to the west of Crocodile Pools, so that when opportunity should offer the starving braves might not have to wait for provisions. For some weeks the troops had been fixed on a string of kopjes to the north of the Metsima Suma Bridge, while the Boers' laager, strongly fortified, occupied another ridge in the vicinity. Both Britons and Boers from their elevated posts could command the river above named, and the Notwani

The Transvaal War

River for some miles. On the 26th of February, for some unaccountable reason, the Boers suddenly made themselves scarce, and suspicion grew that events elsewhere were demanding their prompt attention. The disappearance caused some sensation, as it was reported—erroneously as it afterwards proved—that not a Boer was visible between the British and Mafeking. Thereupon Colonel Plumer decided to be up and doing, and an advance on Lobatsi (situated some forty-five miles from Colonel Baden-Powell's kingdom) was organised. First of all telegraph lines and rails were repaired, an armoured train being sent forward to Pitsani Pothlugo to protect the operations. This work accomplished, rations for thirty days, the base hospital, &c., were transferred to Lobatsi.

There on the morning of the 6th of March Colonel Plumer's force arrived. The efforts of the relieving party were now directed to the reconstruction of the railway and bridges which had been wrecked by the Boers in October. These were slowly got into working order. Reconnaissances were pushed south with a view to farther advance, and provision was made for the protection of the railway behind him as Colonel Plumer advanced.

At daybreak on the 13th of March a column of some 300 men with three guns marched towards Kanya on the west, while Colonel Bodle (B.S.A.P.) with 150 men and a Maxim proceeded towards Pitsani. When the former party had succeeded in reaching a place some twenty miles beyond Lobatsi camp they were suddenly ordered to return. Captain Maclaren with his party, though fairly worn out after a long day's tramp, at once obeyed orders, marched throughout the night, and by dawn on the 15th had retraced his steps. The reason for the recall was this. Colonel Bodle's advanced scouts had come upon swarms of the enemy to the north of Pitsani, and the colonel with his small force had been compelled to retire in hot haste. His position was a ticklish one, for all round, in every available kopje, the Boers had ensconced themselves, and only by great nerve and splendid presence of mind was it possible to execute anything like an orderly retreat. But these qualities were possessed by Colonel Bodle, who promptly retired his ambulance and waggons, covering their move by forming his troops in Zulu fashion in crescent shape. Unluckily the right horn of the crescent, under Lieutenant Chapman, was pounced upon by some hidden Boers, who succeeded in making three or four of the party prisoners, and capturing a box or two of ammunition. Owing to an accident to his horse Lieutenant Chapman was thrown and captured. Corporal Galt nearly shared the same fate, but while he was engaged in a smart tussle for freedom, Colonel Bodle came to the rescue and put the Boers to flight. The Dutchmen then commenced to follow at the heels of the column, approaching to within some 2500 yards of the camp,



COLONEL PLUMER'S GALLANT ATTEMPT TO RELIEVE MAFEKING FROM THE NORTH.

Drawing by Frank Dudd, R.I., from a Sketch by F. J. Mackenzie.

Colonel Plumer's Operations

doing some damage among cattle with their smokeless guns, which with difficulty could be located. Their fire was eventually returned, but not before Lieutenant Tyler (West Riding Regiment) had fallen a victim to a shell, which caught him in his tent and killed him instantaneously. The next day (the 16th) the Boers pursued their aggravations, and the British, as usual, gave a very good account of themselves, though their gunners had neither range-finder nor range-table. An animated artillery duel lasted for some hours, and was only terminated at sunset by the successful landing of a shell in the midst of the Boer guns. This served to silence them for the rest of the day. That done, the troops retired, most of the force moving from Lobatsi back to Crocodile Pools (whither stores, &c., had been removed by rail during the whole of the previous night), while Colonel Plumer and the mounted men took the direction of Kanya. On the 17th of March the armoured train voyaged towards Lobatsi, where it was saluted by the Boers, who had returned in hordes with marvellous celerity, and were hovering round that place.

The enemy had now placed a 1-pound Maxim and a 12½-pounder on the east side of the line 4000 yards to the south of the main camp, but fortunately the right flank was protected by the Chief Bathoen, who defied the Boers to enter his territory. The left flank, however, engaged Colonel Plumer's attention, and there was every fear that the enemy, repulsed on the western border, might fall in force upon the Rhodesians. The Dutchmen were now busy in wrecking the rail south of Lobatsi, and preparing to meet any further advance made by Colonel Plumer with stout resistance. On the 18th, somewhat exhausted with fruitless toil and endless marching and fighting, the troops were once more at their starting-point on the ridges overlooking the Metsima Suma and Notwani Rivers, Colonel Plumer's force now occupying the position there formerly held by the Boers.

On the 21st Commandant Snyman entertained himself with a little journey to Lobatsi and gaily bombarded it, in ignorance that it had been evacuated by Colonel Plumer's force, and explosions on all sides announced that he also was engaged in the destruction of the railway. While the Boers were away, the Baralongs made hay—they utilised the shining hour by looting some of the Boer cattle and driving them in triumph into Mafeking. There, the result of Snyman's attack on Plumer was in its way approved; the town enjoyed temporary repose. The bombardment lessened for a day or two, and the besieged were buoyed up by the hope that Colonel Plumer was pursuing his advance.

To intercept the same the enemy had taken up positions at Maritzuni and Ramathlabama, but they at the same time had to

The Transvaal War

engage themselves with a native chief in the south. This personage, who had hitherto been friendly to them, working on the good old principle of "kick a man when he's down," had heard of the Boer reverses in the Free State, and promptly seized his opportunity.

On the 25th Colonel Plumer left his base camp with a force of infantry and as little impedimenta as possible, and invaded the Transvaal, making two rapid night marches for the purpose of threatening the Boer lines of communication. In this way, though he found himself too weak in men and guns for really aggressive operations, he determined to make himself a thorn in the side of the persecutors of Mafeking, and keep the Boer hordes too busily engaged to allow of their attempting serious operations on their own part.

Early on the morning of the 31st Colonel Plumer, with 270 mounted men, some infantry, and a Maxim reached Ramathlabama, where the Boers were said to have made their headquarters. The advance guard under Colonel White proceeding within six miles of Mafeking, encountered a Boer commando, whereupon Captain Kensman on the left and Major Bordan on the right simultaneously became engaged. Desperate fighting ensued, the Boers almost doubling the British. The Dutchmen formed a semicircle, vainly endeavouring to outflank the party east and west, while Colonel Plumer's small force, fighting "tooth and nail," retired slowly, the squadrons covering the retreat of the unmounted men for a good ten miles till the force reached its base. Owing to the close proximity of the Boer laagers, reinforcements of Dutchmen and guns were constantly at hand, while Colonel Plumer was entirely at a disadvantage. Little cover was available, and the railway embankment, which was his only protection, was barely two feet high. Captain Crewe, a most popular officer, was mortally wounded while covering the retreat of the rest, as was also Lieutenant Milligan while gallantly defending his position.

Some interesting particulars of the fighting outside Mafeking came in a letter from a trooper.

"On our latest patrol we had a real exciting time. We went to have a look at Mafeking, and actually saw the promised land, but we had to pay dearly for the sight. We marched from here (halfway between Kanya and Mafeking) on March 30th, and arrived at Ramathlabama on the 31st at 9 A.M. Between 300 and 350 men went, with one Maxim, all under Colonel Plumer himself. We were all mounted except thirty men of E Squadron. We formed a camp at Ramathlabama, and at 11 A.M. all the mounted men moved off towards Mafeking, our unmounted men and the Maxim remaining in camp. Our troop and Crewe's scouts formed the advance guard under our skipper, Colonel White. We rode on about eight miles, and then we got our first glimpse of Mafeking. We raised a bit of a cheer on spotting the place. Very soon we saw a large body of Boers coming up in front at a fast pace, while others were working round

Colonel Plumer's Operations

our flanks. We started firing at 1000 yards, with hardly anything to see to fire at. Their fire was high at first, but some of them soon got the range. We had to retreat, as we were far outnumbered, and the Boers were working away at our flanks. Moreover, they had an unlimited supply of ammunition, their base being a mile or two away, while we had to go slow with ours. So we retired by alternate squadrons.

"We were nearly caught once. The Boers were coming round on our flank, and were making for some Kaffir kraals whence they would have had us fairly on toast. Our skipper, however, spotted the move in time, and we raced them for the first place and won. Crewe's men, who were sent to the second kraal, also got there first. We made them turn tail and bolt, and they were never afterwards quite so keen in getting round our flank. Our skipper worked splendidly. It was a running fight for about eight miles, lasting from 1 P.M. till 6 P.M. When we reached the camp we found that Colonel Plumer had decided to abandon it, and had already sent the waggons off an hour before. We had to cover the retreat of the unmounted men, who had been in turn covering the retreat of the Maxim. There was a very warm time over that business. The unmounted men nearly got caught. Our casualties were pretty heavy—52 in all—12 killed, 26 wounded, and 14 missing. Altogether 75 horses were killed, wounded, and missing. Don't get the idea that we were disgracefully licked. We retreated certainly and were chased by the Boers, but we retreated in perfect order without any confusion. Moreover, in retreating we were doing as we were intended to do. Colonel Baden-Powell had some move he wished to make at Mafeking, and we were to draw away as many Boers as possible, and we certainly were successful in that. There must have been at least 600 or 700 against us."

In the fight at Ramathlabama the following were taken prisoners :—Captain K. Maclaren, Captain F. Crewe, Captain Duncan Robertson, all badly wounded ; the two last mentioned since dead. Staff-Officers Cecil and Granville and nine soldiers, of whom six were more or less severely wounded, were also captured.

Owing to the absence of war correspondents with Colonel Plumer's force this officer's unceasing efforts to match the Boers and rescue Colonel Baden-Powell received none of the publicity they deserved. It has been possible only from private sources to gauge the terrible tension of the situation, and the truly noble activity that was maintained in the face of a most alarming outlook. Of the heroism of the commander little has been said, but from a few lines written by a trooper we may understand how his gallant conduct stimulated his men. He said : "It was a good fight, and our men behaved very well. Plumer was slightly wounded, but behaved splendidly. He sent his horse away and walked behind the dismounted men, encouraging them when they were retreating."

Colonel Bodle and Captain Rolt (adjutant) were also slightly wounded.

Some splendid service was rendered by Sergeant-Major Manning (5th Dragoon Guards), on whom the whole work of staff officer afterwards devolved.

The Transvaal War

Another writer shows the trying circumstances in which Colonel Plumer's campaign was conducted, circumstances which, when the historian of the future sets to work, cannot be disregarded :—

"On the 31st ult. we got as far as six miles from Mafeking, but had to retire after four hours' heavy fighting, losing 48 killed, wounded, and missing. We have had a very rough time indeed, always fighting against much superior odds armed with splendid artillery, living on short rations, without tents or any other shelter, wet through with the rain, and scorched with the sun, and yet the people at home never give us a thought. We have been so hard up for tobacco that men have been smoking tea leaves. We have not had a thing from home, not even the Queen's chocolate, and yet we have done as much in our small way as the troops down south. Of course, we have had no big battles, as we have not the men or guns, but we have had constant patrols and skirmishes, nearly always losing men killed or wounded, or both. We have also suffered very heavily with fever and dysentery, and all our hospitals are full."

These lines in their bald simplicity are quoted because they, like the work they describe, were originated with no view to effect nor applause, and serve exactly to describe the modest deeds of perpetual valour which were perpetrated by our countrymen, and which by force of circumstance were left to waste their smartness "on the desert air."



LOBATSI RAILWAY STATION

LIST OF STAFF

THE following is a list of appointments to the Staff of the Eighth Division, which left England in February :—

EIGHTH DIVISION

Lieutenant-General on the Staff—Major-General (temporary Lieutenant-General) Sir H. M. L. Rundle, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., R.A.
Aides-de-Camp (2).
Assistant Adjutant-General—Colonel G. E. Harley, C.B.
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Generals—Major A. E. J. Cavendish, *p.s.c.*, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders ; Captain G. I. Walsh, Leicestershire Regt.
Assistant Provost-Marshal¹—Lieut.-Colonel R. H. Morrison.
Principal Medical Officer—Lieut.-Colonel W. A. May, Royal Army Medical Corps.
Medical Officer—Major J. W. Jerome, Royal Army Medical Corps.
Chaplains—Rev. C. F. O'Reilly ; Rev. F. J. P. Jellicoe.
Divisional Signalling Officer—Captain C. H. Bennett, Worcestershire Regt.

16TH BRIGADE

Major-General on the Staff—Major-General B. B. D. Campbell, M.V.O.
Aide-de-Camp.
Brigade-Major—Captain E. F. O. Gascoigne, D.S.O., Grenadier Guards.

17TH BRIGADE

Major-General on the Staff—Major-General J. E. Boyes.
Aide-de-Camp.
Brigade-Major—Captain C. B. FitzHenry, 7th Hussars.

At the same time a Ninth Division was formed under the command of Lieut.-General Sir Henry Colvile, consisting of the 3rd (Highland Brigade), Colonel (Major-General) H. A. Macdonald, C.B., and 19th Brigade, Colonel (Major-General) H. L. Smith-Dorrien. For particulars, see Vol. V.

¹ Graded as a Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General.

APPENDIX

KURUMAN¹

AT time of the surrender of Kuruman it was impossible to obtain complete details regarding the gallant defence of the place. The following short story published by the *Cape Argus* serves to throw light on deeds too brave to be overlooked:—

"On the 15th October 1899, the Cape Police, Vryburg, 96 miles north-east of Kuruman, evacuated their station without giving battle to the Boers; the detachment with one Maxim and 110 men retiring on Kimberley. The commanding officer, Major Scott, Cape Police, committed suicide *en route*. Refugees came into Kuruman on the 16th and following days.

"On the 23rd October communication was cut off from Kuruman except by wire to Koopmansfontein, and on the 5th November all wires were cut. Information reached Kuruman that the South African Republic and Orange Free State Boers, assisted by rebels from that and surrounding districts, intended to march on Kuruman and hoist the 'Vierkleur'.

"The defence of Kuruman was commenced by Captain Bates,² C.P. (formerly captain B.B.P. under Sir Frederick Carrington), assisted by Sergeant Hemsworth, C.P., and Captain Dennison, Intelligence Department. On the 19th October, Colonel Kekewich, officer commanding forces Griqualand West and Bechuanaland, instructed the force to endeavour to prevent Kuruman falling into the hands of the enemy. The officer commanding, Captain Bates, had orders to defend the place, and the Kuruman defence force was raised, consisting of, approximately, 54 Cape Police and Special Police (whites), 62 Bastards and natives—total, 116.

"Redoubts were built on the north, south, east, and west sides of the main camp, which was fortified with trenches and stone walls loopholed and raised with sandbags.

"On the 12th November 1899, a letter was received from Commandant Visser (signed Fighting General), demanding the surrender of Kuruman voluntarily in the name of the Z.A.R. and O.F.S. Governments, saying that he was at Pakani, six miles off, with his commando, and failing compliance with his demand he would attack and take Kuruman by main force at 7 A.M. the following day. A reply was sent that should he attack he would have to take the consequences of his illegal act, as no instructions had been issued by the Colonial Government to evacuate the town.

"At 9 A.M. on the 13th November a commando of about 400 men came at full gallop towards the Soeden Mission Station, three miles from Kuruman. Coming within range (1500 yards) the redoubt on the eastern side opened fire on them with their rifles. The enemy halted, and then at once retired out of range. After about ten minutes, one portion, 250 strong, advanced towards the Mission Station, the other, 150 strong, moving to the ridge above the Court House. At 10 A.M. the commando from Soeden attacked the western redoubt held by Corporal Childs, C.P., with six whites and seven natives. Heavy firing took place. At about 5 P.M. the enemy, who had during the day occupied a ridge about 400 yards from the redoubt, retired, and in so doing lost heavily—they were seen falling from their horses. Our men behaved splendidly. The estimated Boer loss was six killed and fourteen wounded; ours, one native killed. Captain Bates rode up during the day to encourage the men, and both going and returning was received with heavy volleys from the Boers, but both he and his horse returned unhurt. While the fighting was going on Corporal Barnes, C.P., and nine men volunteered to take an extra supply of ammunition to this redoubt, about 1000 yards in the open, under heavy fire, and remained there to the end of the attack without any further casualty. Firing from all the enemy's schanzas was kept up during the night.

"At dawn next day it was discovered that the enemy had built schanzas (stone entrenchments) all round our redoubts at distances varying from 1200 to 900 yards, and commenced firing volleys into our positions. We replied, and our losses this day were one native slightly wounded and five horses badly wounded. The enemy stuck to their schanzas and continued firing heavily on us daily until the 19th November, when to our surprise they withdrew to Pakani.

"On the 20th November our scouts, who were sent to find out the enemy's movements, returned, stating that they were retiring towards Vryburg.

"On the 26th November it was reported by our scouts that the Boers had formed three

¹ See Vol. iii. p. 25.

² This officer's name was originally given as Baker in telegrams home.

Appendix

laagers, one at Mooifontein, 30 miles away; one at Magagapirie, 20 miles off; and one at Botitilose, about 18 miles off; the total commando numbering about 1100 to 1200 men, and a large number of waggons.

"On the 1st December a headman, Selo, reported that the Boers were waiting for a cannon from Pretoria, and were coming again to attack us or starve us out. Captain Bates strengthened the forts as much as possible to resist shell fire.

"On the 5th December the enemy arrived with from 1100 to 1200 men under Visser, of the Transvaal, now Commandant, and Field-Cornet Wessels, of the Free State, but without any cannon. They commenced by attacking Captain Dennison's (Intelligence Officer to Commanding Officer, Kimberley, Colonel Kekewich) redoubt on the east, but were repulsed. The enemy made five night attacks on this redoubt and a smaller one held by Private Brown, Special Police, about 300 yards on the S.E. Their mode of attack was as follows:—They built schanzes within 500 yards of these redoubts, surrounding them, and threw up small schanzes of stone and bags within thirty or forty yards of the redoubts early in the night and attacked about two or three o'clock in the morning, retiring from time to time to these small schanzes. They thus succeeded in pushing off the sandbags from our redoubts on the S.E. side, but were driven back, losing about four killed and ten or twelve wounded. This redoubt was held by Private Brown, three white men, and two natives, the enemy numbering from sixty to seventy men. Our casualties were one white man wounded. During these attacks a bullet (presumably an explosive one) struck inside the east fort or redoubt, badly wounding two whites and two others slightly. Firing was kept up night and day for these five days. The enemy ceased their attacks and went in for volley firing and sniping, coming nearer our redoubts by building schanzes during the night. These two redoubts had to be abandoned, as the loopholes of sandbags were shot away, and there was no means of building them up again. The enemy occupied them after being abandoned for two nights, and also took possession of a store in a hollow about 800 yards from the main camp, between it and the Court House. This left only one of our redoubts occupied by our defence force, and which commanded the water. Corporal Gash, C.P., was in charge. Our horses had to be watered at night.

"The Boers made several attempts to cut us off from the water, but were prevented by our pickets, who were placed in entrenched positions to cover our cattle and horses while watered. The Boers must have fired away an enormous quantity of ammunition, and they had five waggon-loads of it. A unique armistice was arranged on Christmas Day. F. C. Wessels, of the Free State, wrote to the Commanding Officer saying that if we would not fire on them this day, the Boers would not fire on us. This was agreed to, and word was sent round to all the schanzes and redoubts notifying this. The men came out, but to our surprise, as one of us was going to bathe, a volley from the Transvaal Boer schanzes on the east was sent after him. Wessels went to inquire the reason, and was told that the Transvaal commando would not agree to this armistice, whereupon Wessels arranged with us that the Free State men, who were on the south and south-east side, would not fire on us, and our men, running the gauntlet of the Transvaal fire for about 20 yards, went under cover of the Free State schanzes, and British and Boer bathed together at the bathing-place. This circumstance caused a split in the Boer camp, and Wessels with 150 men of the Free State burghers left for the south, presumably towards Kimberley. The Boers continued firing and sniping daily. Up to this we had one white (Private Ward, C.P.) and two natives killed, seven whites and seven natives wounded. Of the animals 23 horses were killed and wounded and three oxen killed. We were holding out and were confident of doing so for another two months, when on the 1st January 1900, a New Year's gift arrived in the Boer camp in the shape of a 9-pounder. They started shelling at dawn, with common shell, the redoubt on the north side; then came to a ridge on the south and shelled the main camp, four shells falling in the camp without doing any serious damage. They then fired on the western redoubt without hitting it. On going to their schanzes about 2000 yards on the eastern side, they shelled the only remaining redoubt on that side, held by Corporal Gash, C.P., and 15 men. The 90th shell breached the redoubt, the 91st and 92nd striking it, and the 93rd falling inside. The men in the redoubt got into the trenches, which, owing to the stony nature of the ground, could not be dug deep, and were subjected to such a heavy fire from three of the enemy's schanzes, that they were compelled to surrender.

"Captain Bates then saw that as the key of the position had fallen, and that reinforcements could not possibly arrive for weeks or months, it was hopeless to continue to hold out.

"Thus Kuruman was surrendered after seven weeks, and its defence was principally due to Captain Bates. Captain Dennison and Sergeant Hemsworth and Captain Bates were sent to the Pretoria gaol (as they were supposed to know too much, whatever that meant), and the Magistrate was sent to the State Model School with the other officers."

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

DT
930
C7

Creswicke, Louis
South Africa and the
Transvaal War

v.3-4

